

**Jaguar Fighter Aircraft** Crashes In Haryana, **Pilot Ejects Safely** 

CHANDIGARH: A Jaguar

fighter aircraft of the Indian

Air Force (IAF) crashed in

Haryana on Friday but the

pilot managed to eject safely,

According to the IAF, the

Jaguar aircraft crashed at Am-

bala during a routine train-

ing sortie after encountering

system malfunction. The pilot

maneuvered the aircraft away

from any habitation on ground,

An inquiry has been ordered

by the IAF, to ascertain the

before ejecting safely.

officials said.

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REGION

**BECOME AN ACTIVE PARTNER IN CAMPAIGN AGAINST DRUGS, SAYS PUNJAB** 

#### CORPORATES & INDUSTRY

**SEBI USING TECHNOLOGY IN BIG WAY TO PROTECT INVESTORS: TUHIN KANTA** 



**DELHI MAN ARRESTED** FOR SELLING 'FAKE TICKETS' OF DILJIT DOSANJH'S **CONCERT** 

# Yudh Nashian Virudh: No One Involved in Drug Trade will Jatehdar Akal Takht Gyani Raghubir be Spared, Regardless of Position or Influence: Cheema Singh removed by SGPC

man of the Yudh Nashian Virudh Cabinet Sub-Committee, Finance Minister Harpal Singh Cheema, declared on Friday that as the decisive war for complete eradication of drugs from the state has been gaining momentum the Chief Minister Bhagwant Singh Mann led Punjab government has adopted a stringent zero-tolerance policy against individuals involved in drug trafficking. He warned that that no one involved in this scourge or attempting to shield offenders will be spared, regardless of their position or

In a press communiqué issued here following a twoday whirlwind tour of dis- medical drugs have been of chemist shops, and raids tricts Rupnagar, SBS Nagar, Gurdaspur, Pathankot, and Tarn Taran to boost the Yudh Nashian Virudh Campaign across the state, Finance Minister Harpal Singh Cheema revealed that 530 FIRs have

Gold slips below Rs

89,000-mark, silver

**NEW DELHI:** According to

the All India Sarafa Associa-

tion, gold price slipped below

Rs 89,000 per 10 grams in the

national capital on Friday due

to subdued domestic demand

metal of 99.9 per cent purity dipped by Rs 200 to Rs 88,900

per 10 grams, registering its

second day of decline. Gold of

99.5 per cent purity also went

lower by Rs 200 to Rs 88,500

mand from local jewellers as

well as retail buyers led to the

However, silver climbed by

Rs 500 to Rs 99,500 per kilo-

gram, extending the gains for

the fourth straight day. In the

past four sessions, the silver had advanced by Rs 3,100.

In futures trade on the MCX.

gold for April delivery slipped

by Rs 50 to Rs 85,983 per 10

On the global front, gold

futures were trading flat at

\$2,929.30 per ounce. Mean-

while, spot gold rose \$10.14

or 0.35 per cent to \$2,921.94

per ounce. However, silver

futures in the Asian market

hours quoted 0.17 per cent

lower at \$33.28 per ounce.

fall in gold prices.

Traders said reduced de-

The price of the precious

climbs Rs 500



uals arrested, and narcotics including 42 KG of heroin, 15 KG of opium, and 41, 027 seized in the state from March 1 to March 5 under the Yudh Nashian Virudh campaign.

**CM MANN** 

The Finance Minister highlighted various activities be- meetings with students in uring conducted in the state, ban and rural schools and colincluding cordon and search leges, and organizing Sampark

the supervision of senior police officials, checking of jails for mobile phones, checking on known smugglers, drug traffickers, and couriers. Additionally, public participation is being encouraged through

meetings under the anti-drug campaign. Finance Minister Cheema said that the authorities have been directed to intensify their efforts against the sale of banned drugs also, emphasizing the crucial role of drug inspectors in this en-

The Finance Minister said that while the conviction rate in NDPS cases was 58 percent during the previous Congress government, it has increased to 86 percent over the last three years under the AAPled state government, with a goal to reach 100 percent. He highlighted SBS Nagar's impressive 99 percent and Rupnagar's 95 percent conviction rate. Finance Minister Harpal Singh Cheema also launched a scathing attack on the previous SAD-BJP and Congress-led state governments, stating that the synthetic drug "Chitta" was unheard of before the SAD-BJP regime took power from 2007



**JAGMOHAN SINGH** 

Sikh preacher Kuldeep Singh Gadgaj appointed Jathedar of Takht Kesgarh Sahib with a charge of Akal Takht

Outgoing Akal Takht Jathe-

dar Giani Raghbir Singh has been removed here on March 7 during the SGPC Executive committee to proceed as head Granthi of Sri Harmandar

Outgoing officiating Kesgarh Sahib Jathedar Giani Sultan Singh is to serve as Har-pending.

mandar Sahib Granthi. SGPC member Tek Singh Dhanaula to serve as Takht Damdama

cause of the accident. A British-French consor-Sahib Jathedar tium-developed supersonic jet Meanwhile the decision with regard to resignation of

attack aircraft, the SEPECAT Jaguar was conceived in the SGPC president Harjinder 1960s and began to be manu-Singh Dhami has been kept factured and enter service in various nations' air forces in the 1970s. India started receiving these fighters at the begin-

> were renamed "Shamsher".. In service with the UK's Royal Air Force till 2007 and the French Air Force till 2005 before being replaced by the Eurofighter Typhoon and the Dassault Rafale, respectively, it was also used by the air forces of Ecuador, Nigeria,

ning of the 1980s and they

and Oman. Currently, India is the only nation using the vintage fighter, which has also been manufactured and upgraded by the Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd to incorporate new avionics, a remodelled cockpit, and

modern armaments. The Indian Air Force is reported to maintain six squadrons of the aircraft, including two based in Ambala. The other four are based in Gorakhpur and Jamnagar. There are three variants of the fighter jet, including the IB, which is used for training, the IS, and Apart attack, the IAF envisages a

#### maritime strike operation role for the fighters. 'India charges very high tariffs'; Trump



**NEW DELHI:** India is a very high tariff nation. US President Donald Trump has said as he reiterated that reciprocal tariffs on countries that impose levies on American goods will kick in

"And the big one will be on April 2, when reciprocal tariffs so if India or China, or any of the countries that really...India is a very high tariff nation," he said.

on April 2.

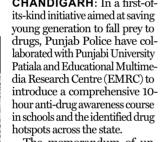
"I'll tell you what's a high tariff nation - it's Canada. Canada charges us 250% for our milk products and other products,' Trump said in the Oval Office on Thursday as he signed some executive orders.

Trump also said right now, the tariffs are "temporary" and 'small ones" but "the predominant tariffs" that will be reciprocal in nature will start from April 2 and they will be a "big game changer for our country'

"Because we've been ripped off by every country in the world, and now whatever they charge us, they charge us 150-200% (and) we charge them nothing. So whatever they charge

us, we're going to charge them, and there'll be no getting out of it. So we look forward to April 2. I've been looking forward to that date for a long time. And that'll be something very big, Trump said. This is the second time in

#### Punjab to introduce 10-hour anti-drug awareness course in schools CHANDIGARH: In a first-ofthis MoU digital content will be



The memorandum of understanding (MoU) was signed between ADGP (Anti-Narcotics Task Force-ANTF) Nilabh Kishore, Registrar Punjabi University Sanjiv Puri and Dir-ector EMRC (Patiala) Daljeet Ami in broader anti-drug campaign



the presence of Director General of Police (DGP) Gauray Yaday here. DGP Yadav said this strategic partnership, part of state's

'Yudh Nashian Virudh', will drive a structured drug awareness program to safeguard the youth and communities. He said the 10-hour course, designed to be both engaging and informative, will include lectures, audio-visual content, and interactive sessions covering all aspects of drug abuse prevention. It will be introduced in schools and identified hotspot areas across the state, targeting students and vulnerable youth, he said, adding upon completion, participants will receive a certificate, recognising their commitment to staying drug-free. Sharing more details, ADGP Nilabh Kishore said under

developed by EMRC and Punjabi University Patiala, while ANTF Punjab will finalise the content and appoint an editorial board to oversee the creation, development and delivery of the content.

The ANTF will further identify subject matter experts responsible for preparing the script, he said adding that the content will be created in English as well as in

The ADGP said the course is

expected to be launched in the next academic session and will be integrated into both formal

## India Signs \$248 Million Defence Deal with Russia for T-72 Tank Engines

NEW DELHI: The Ministry of Defence has signed a \$248 million contract with Russia's Rosoboronexport the procurement of powerful 1000 HP Engines for T-72 tanks of the Indian Army, in fully formed, completely knocked down and semi knocked down conditions.

The deal also includes Transfer of Technology (ToT) from Rosoboronexport to Armoured Vehicles Nigam Limited (Heavy Vehicle Factory), Avadi, Chennai, for integration and subsequent licensed production of engines under ToT to boost the "Make in India"

initiative in the defence sector. The T-72 is the mainstay of the Indian Army's tank fleet which is at present fitted with 780 HP Engine. Equipping the existing fleet of T-72 Tanks with 1000 HP Engine will enhance the battlefield mobility and offensive capability Aatmanirbhar drive was "yield-



of Indian Army, the Defence Ministry said.

On the back of strong government support India's defence production reached a record high of Rs 1.27 lakh crore in 2023-24, this represents a 174 per cent increase from Rs 46,429 crore in 2014-15. The country aims to reach Rs 3 lakh crore in defence production

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh recently said that India's ing the desired results" and the country was poised to reach Rs 50,000 crore in defence exports by 2029-30.

Rajnath Singh said that the government's efforts of achieve self-reliance are turning out to be highly successful as defence exports, which were around just Rs 600 crore 10 years ago, crossed a record number of Rs 21,000 crore in Financial Year 2023-24. He exuded confidence that the progress will continue and defence exports will reach

Rs 50,000 crore by 2029-30. Driven by strong government support and increasing private sector participation, India's degrow at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of around 20 per cent during FY24-FY29,

according to a CareEdge Rat-

ings report.

The collaboration between government and private sector entities in India's defence sector has driven advancements in arms and ammunition, aerospace, electronics, and Naval

technologies. This collaboration has been supported by policies such as 'Make in India' and liberalised FDI norms, which have enhanced domestic manufacturing capabilities, attracted international investments in defence innovation and driven notable growth in exports of military equipment, the report points out.

## 1984 Sikh genocide accused are being brought to book: Sirsa

CHANDIGARH: BJP national Secretary Manjinder Singh Sirsa said on Thursday that the accused in the 1984 Sikh genocide cases are being brought to the book and punished after four painful decades that the Sikh community has undergone. "It was only after Prime Minister Narendra Modi constituted an SIT in 2014 and people are now getting justice, " he said.

Sirsa said the prime accused Sajjan Kumar has been convicted in the second case and has been awarded life term after four decades.

"It was Rajiv Gandhi who orchestrated the attack and later gave plum political postings to those who executed his nefarious plans."Delhi minister Sirsa said the plum political postings held. prime accused Sajjan Kumar, Jagdish Tytler, H.K.L. Bhagat, Dharam Shastri and Lalit Maken are some of the gress "adjusted" wrongdoers as prime people.

He added similarly accused Tytler had been convicted despite the Congressled Union Government CBI team having given him clean chit in anti-Sikh riots."The SIT has now filed charge sheet and charges are being framed. The victims of 1984 riots now know that their cases are in the right hands. Had PM Modi not constituted the SIT, the offenders would have continued to hoodwink law and people would still have been bereft



33 years, 80 people have taken to task who perpetrated the crimes against Sikhs and had gone scot free."Such offenders had never even dreamt that the law could catch on with them. Now cases have been registered, arrests have been made, witnesses are deposing before courts and justice is being delivered."

Sirsa said in Kanpur after

Slamming Arvind Kejriwalled Aam Aadmi Party of lootsaid that having lost their base in Delhi, the entire party has now focused towards Punjab. He said the party was scavengexamples of the way Con- ing on Punjab's resources to meet its need for power and

He said the Kejriwal would soon show the door to Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann and take over the cudgels of Puniab.Sirsa added that for the past three years, the AAP had slept over issues of drugs, corruption and law and order in Punjab."It is now trying to prove that it has risen from a slumber, "Sirsa said.He said Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann has made a mockery of the system by declaring that Rs 1.81 lakh has been seized as drug money.

## DUPLICATE VOTER IDENTITY CARDS

## Congress Rejects ECI's Response, Calls it 'Feeble and Duplicitous'

over 'duplicate' voter identity card numbers, the Election Commission of India (ECI) said it would address the "decades-long" matter in the next three months. However, the Congress has rejected ECI's response, calling it "feeble and duplicitous".

The party has raised concerns over the integrity of the voter lists, which it claims are flawed and dubious.

"The Congress rejects this feeble and duplicitous explanation by the ECI and reiterates its demands to come clean on the sanctity of voter lists in India," the grand old party's Empowered Action Group of Leaders and Experts (EAGLE)

said in a statement on Friday. EAGLE was set by the Congress party to keep a "bird's eye view" of elections in the

duct of free and fair elections by the Election Commission of India".

Maken, Digvijaya Singh, Abhishek Manu Singhvi, Praveen Chakravarty, Pawan Khera, Gurdeep Singh Sappal, Nitin Raut, and Vamshi Chand

of India (ECI) has issued a duplications response on the issue of same voter IDs being allotted to multiple voters. The ECI, in its response, hides behind its processes to offer a feeble explanation," added the statement. According to the statement,

the ECI has been forced to admit that its voter lists are flawed and not trustworthy.

The panel includes Ajay

Election Commission, in a letter issued on September The Election Commission 18th, 2008, to Chief Electoral Officers of all States, had said that 'voter-IDs are unique'. However, the ECI today says,

the issue of duplicate voter-IDs is a "decades long issue". "Which statement of the ECI should the citizens of India believe? Why should an average Indian voter today trust

"How is it that 17 years later, The EAGLE statement ECI speaks of constituting a body to clean up this process further explained that "the

the party questioned.

the Election Commission?'

the ECI then all along misrepresenting to the voters of India that the 'voter-IDs were unique'? If yes, then what are the other processes which ECI has been misrepresenting to its citizens?" the Congress questioned. The Congress leaders said

that the initial response of the **Election Commission to these** questions was to defend itself by stating that 'this could happen only across states'. "But there are instances with

clear evidence of many voters with the same voter-ID in the same assembly constituency in the same state," the party said, asking: "Is the ECI then lying? As the issue of duplicate voter IDs clearly is not across different states, but rather in the same state and, in many cases, in the same constituencies.

## Japan Commits to Supporting India's 2047 Goals, Expanding Partnership to AI, Renewable Energy, & IT

NEW DELHI: Japan's Ambassador to India, Ono Keiichi, affirmed on Thursday that Japan will support India in achieving its developmental goals for 2047, while emphasising that both countries are poised to expand their economic partnership into emerging sectors such as renewable energy, artificial intelligence, and information technology.

Speaking on the sidelines of the 48th Joint Meeting of the Japan-India Business Cooperation Committee (JIBCC) and the India-Japan Business Cooperation Committee (IJBCC), Ambassador Keiichi characterised the bilateral relationship as one of natural partnership.

"Japan and India have been natural partners, and for more than 10 years, we have been special, strategic and global partners," he stated. The Ambassador highlighted

the robust investment and trade relations between the two nations, expressing confidence in future growth across new eco-



grow in new economic areas like renewable energy, AI, IT, and others. Japanese businesses are keen on building relationships and making investments with Indian businesses," he remarked.

Ambassador Keiichi also emphasised Japan's interest in strengthening people-to-people exchanges, which he described as a vital component of bilateral relations. On March 5, a 17-member delegation from the JIBCC, led by Chairman Tatsuo Yasunaga, met with Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

The delegation comprised senior executives from prominent

various sectors including manufacturing, banking, airlines, pharmaceuticals, plant engineering, and logistics. During the meeting, Yasunaga

briefed the Prime Minister ahead of the joint committee meeting held in the national capital. Discussions focused on key

strategic areas including the development of high-quality, low-cost manufacturing capabilities in India, expanding manufacturing operations for global markets with particular emphasis on Africa, and enhancing human resource development and exchanges.

as many days that Trump has remarked about India's tariffs.

# Become an active partner in campaign Giani Kuldeep Singh Gadgaj appointed against drugs, says Punjab CM Mann as Jathedar of Takht Sri Kesgarh Sahib

Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann on Thursday gave a call to people to become active partners in the campaign against drugs so that this scourge can be completely wiped out from the state.

Addressing a gathering after launching the City Surveillance and Management System, the Chief Minister said the government has launched a major crackdown against drugs.He said this meticulously planned campaign has been launched to snap the supply line of drugs, put the drug peddlers behind the bars and ensure the rehabilitation of the drug addicts

Mann thanked the people for giving an overwhelming response to the anti-drug campaign, but he said this war cannot be won without the active support of people. The Chief Minister urged the people to share information about the drug smugglers who

### **Punjab Police busts drug** smuggling networkoperated by USA-based smuggler Jasmit Lucky; 23kg heroin recovered

**JAGMOHAN SINGH** 

Amritsdar

Amritsar Rural Police has recovered 23 Kg Heroin consignment from village Devi Daspura in Divulging details, Director

General of Police (DGP) Punjab Gaurav Yadav on Wednesday, said that preliminary investigation has revealed that the consignment is linked to a smuggling network operated by USA-based smuggler Jasmit Singh alias Lucky.

In this case, accused Sahilpreet Singh alias Karan of village Devi Daspura, who retrieved the consignment, has been nominated, he said, while adding that multiple police teams are actively working to arrest him.

The DGP said that further investigations are underway to trace both backward and forward linkages in the smuggling network

Deputy Inspector General of Police (DIG) Border Range Satinder Singh accompanied by Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Amritsar Rural Maninder Singh, while addressing a press conference said that Police a reliable input that accused Sahilpreet Singh alias Karan has retrieved a consignment of heroin from across the border.

Acting swiftly, teams from Police Station Jandiala launched an intelligence operation and recovered 23 packets of heroin, weighing 1 kg each, kept in a jute bag from a pinpointed location in village Devi Daspura, he said.

He said that probe revealed that accused Sahilpreet was in directly touch with USAbased smuggler Jasmit Singh alias Lucky, who arranged the consignment. According to the information, Jasmit Singh alias Lucky has a criminal background and cases pertaining to Arms Act and Attempt to Murder registered against



crime of smuggling of drugs, adding that exemplary action will be ensured against them.

He said the properties of the drug smugglers acquired through drug money are being razed and confiscated as a part of the mega drive launched by the government.Mann said the drive against drugs will continue till a single ounce of this scourge is present in

government, the Chief Minister said more than 51, 000 youths have got government jobs, 90 per cent households are getting zero bill, more than 2.5 crore people have got free treatment in Aam Aadmi Clinics, besides other initiatives.

He said, apart from fulfilling all guarantees promised to people, the government has also done several works

The government has launched a first-of-its kind initiative in the country, a dedicated Sadak Surakhya Force to ensure enhanced security and to save precious lives on the state and national highways'

to them.Mann said they are here to serve the people and are not from a political background, due to which they are fulfilling every word made to the people.

The Chief Minister said the government has launched a first-of-its kind initiative in the country, a dedicated Sadak Surakhva Force to ensure enhanced security and to save precious lives on the state and

-Gadgaj to perform services as officiating Jathedar of Sri Akal Takht Sahib as well -Baba Tek Singh appointed as Jathedar of Takht Sri Damdama Sahib

Amritsar

**JAGMOHAN SINGH** 

The Executive Committee (EC) of the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC) convened a meeting today at the SGPC office under the leadership of its Senior Vice President Raghujit Singh

Giving information through a statement issued after the EC meeting, Senior Vice President Raghujit Singh Virk said that it was unanimously decided to hold the SGPC's annual budget session on March 28 at 12 noon at Teja Singh Samundri Hall, Amritsar. The budget for the year 2025-26, encompassing SGPC, Gurdwara Sahib management, Dharam Pra-



institutions, and other related matters, will be presented for discussion and approval, he

One of the key resolutions passed in the EC meeting pertained to leadership changes at prominent Sikh Takhts.

About other decisions, Raghujit Singh Virk said that Jathedar Giani Raghbir Singh has been relieved from his duties as Jathedar of Sri Akal Takht Sahib and will now serve as the Head Granthi of Sachkhand Sri Harmandar Sahib. Similarly, charge of officiating Jathedar of Takht Sri Takht Sahib.

Although, Haryana's budget

session is starting from Satur-

day, but the Haryana govern-

ment has given a big relief to

the businessmen of the state

before the budget, the govern-

ment has fixed a time limit for

42 services for businessmen in

the state providing a big relief to

SATISH HANDA

Chandigarh

back from Giani Sultan Singh, but he will continue serving as a Granthi at Sachkhand Sri Harmandar Sahib He said that Sikh scholar

and renowned Sikh preacher Giani Kuldeep Singh Gadgaj has been appointed as the new Jathedar of Takht Sri Kesgarh Sahib. Additionally, he will serve as the acting Jathedar of Sri Akal Takht Sahib until an appointment is made. He said that religious figure Baba Tek Singh, head of Bunga Mastuana, Damdama Sahib has been appointed as Jathedar of Takht Sri Damdama Sahib.

Raghujit Singh Virk emphasized that the appointment of a new Jathedar for Sri Akal Takht Sahib will be done only after extensive consultations with Sikh institutions, Jathebandis and Sampradas and in the meantime, Giani Kuldeep Singh Gadgaj will serve as officiating Jathedar of Akal

change of name or registered

office of the society, 60 days

for amendments in the by-laws

of the society. Registration of

existing society and approval

of the collegium plan will be

done in 15 days, change in the

name of the firm and breaking

of partnership will be done in

A time limit of 44 days has

been fixed for stamp duty re-

fund scheme for large and mega

units, exemption on electricity

seven days.

Big relief to businessmen of Haryana before

budget, setting deadline for 42 services

#### Attack on Sikh businessman in Rishikesh strongly condemned by Jathedar of Sri Akal Takht Sahib



JAGMOHAN SINGH Amritsar

Sri Akal Takht Sahib Jathedar, Singh Sahib Giani Raghbir Singh, has strongly condemned the attack on a Sikh businessman in Rishikesh, Uttarakhand, by a communal group. He has described the incident—where the victim was physically assaulted and his turban and Kes (unshorn hair) were disrespected—as an attack on the fundamental rights and freedoms of different religious communities in the country.

In a written statement issued from the Secretariat of Sri Akal Takht Sahib, Jathedar Giani Raghbir Singh emphasized that it is the fundamental duty of every democratic government to uphold the human rights and freedoms of people from all religious backgrounds. He expressed deep concern over the incident, stating that it is shameful for the democratic fabric of the nation that an angry mob targeted a Sikh businessman's turban and Kes over a minor dispute.

Jathedar Giani Raghbir Singh acknowledged that the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC) has already written to Uttarakhand Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami and the Uttarakhand Police, demanding strict action against the perpetrators. However, he urged the Punjab Government to also take up the matter with the Uttarakhand Government to ensure strong legal action against those responsible.

#### Haryana government releases date sheet of departmental examinations of various departments to be held in March 2025

**GULSHAN KUMAR** Chandigarh

Haryana government has repartmental examinations of various departments to be held in March 2025. These exams will be conducted from March 19 to March 26, 2025, at Saarthak Government Integrated Senior Secondary School, Sector-12A, Panchkula, in both

morning and evening sessions.

regard an official spokesperson

Sharing information in this

of the Administrative Reforms department said that on March 22, 2025 from 10.00 AM to 1.00 PM (morning session) Criminal Law for the candidates for the post of Assistant Commissioner, Extra Assistant Commissioner and E.A.Cs and Tehsildar, Forest Law of Forest Department, Accounts Paper for Animal Husbandry and Dairy Department and Fisheries Department, Group One Paper-A for Block Development and Panchayat Officers and Accounts and Departmental Rules Paper for WildLife Preservation Department exam will be held. Besides this, on the same day (evening session) from 2.00 PM to 5.00 PM, the Civil Law paper for the candidates for the post of Assistant Commissioners, Extra Assistant Commissioners and E.A.Cs and Tehsildars and Land Revenue Paper for Forest Department, Departmental Rules Paper for Animal Husbandry and Dairy Department

The Spokesperson further shared that second paper of

# Punjab govt demolishes several illegal properties of drug peddlers

government on Thursday demolished several illegal properties across the state under Yudh Nashian Virudh Campaign, giving a major blow to the drug traffickers and reaffirming its commitment to making Punjab a drug-free state.

In such a major operation, the Amritsar Corporation, with the support of the Punjab Police, demolished two-storied houses and shops constructed by drug traffickers using JCB machines.Police Commissioner Gurpreet Singh Bhullar oversaw the operation, sending a message against drug trafficking. The demolished properties belonged to two drug traffickers -- Gurmeet Singh and Sandeep Singh, alias Sonu.Three cases have been registered against Gurmeet Singh with 325 grams of smack and 350



grams of heroin seized. Sandeep Singh has four cases registered against him, including three at Sarai Amanat Khan and cases of Anti-Narcotics Force in Mohali. In another operation, continuing its crackdown on illegal properties owned by drug peddlers, the Khanna Police, in collaboration with Municipal Council authorities, demolished

six structures in the local meat market. These properties were built by illegally encroaching on Municipal Council land and allegedly financed with drug money. The demolition was carried out smoothly, with sufficient police personnel deployed to maintain order and prevent disturbances.

Senior Superintendent of

operation and said that the demolition followed reports from the Municipal Council about illegal encroachments by six drug peddlers. She highlighted that two brothers, Aslam and Sunil, known as major drug peddlers in the area, are already facing five drug-related cases.

Sunil Baba is currently in udicial custody, while Aslam is absconding. Other notorious smugglers, including Shindi, Monendro, Pappu, and Gulshan, also faced cases related to drug trafficking and illegal liquor trade. Their illegal properties have been razed, and police teams are working round the clock to apprehend the absconding peddlers. Additionally, the Khanna Police had frozen three properties belonging to drug peddlers in the Payal sub-division on Wednesday, SSP

the entrepreneurs of the state. The government has included 42 services of the Industry and Commerce Department in the Right to Service Act-2014, along with this the both first grievance redressal authority and second grievance redressal authority have been notified to complete the work on time by fixing the time limit for these services, which include redressal of questions and complaints of industries within 15 days, approval of existing society in the same period, boiler registration in 22 days and refund of stamp duty of large mega unit within 44 days. Chief Secretary Anurag Rastogi has already issued its notification yesterday on Thursday, saying that if the

the other side According to information, the time limit has been fixed for registration of boilers as 22 days, renewal as 15 days and change as 10 days. Permission for transfer of boiler inspection and registration book within or outside the state will be given in 10 days. Certificate of boiler manufacturing unit and boiler repairs will be given in 15 days and renewal of certificate will be done in 7 days. Similarly, time for boiler welder certificate and renewal will be 10 days, boiler operation engineer certificate and boiler attendant certificate will be available in 30 days. Under the Haryana Society Registration Act, 3 days have been fixed for approval of the name of societies, 15 days for approval of the governing body, 7 days for

work is not completed within

the stipulated time and the com-

en made afte

duty and open access charges, employment generation subsidy, investment subsidy on value added tax and state goods and services tax. It will take a maximum 15 days for issuance of license for manufacturing IBR welding electrodes and renewal of license, 20 days have been fixed for renewal of interim license and license for against them in this regard by plaint automatically reaches the processing and trading under officials, a provision for penalty the lubricating oil and grease registration of firms will be done in 7 days, change in partners and change of registered office in 3 days. Under Haryana Society Registration, the mandatory annual statement can be filed within 30 days, a period of 30 days have also been fixed for the proposal of the meetings of the governing body and the general body. At the same time, the list of elected members of the collegium will have to be submitted within 15 days. The nomination of the members of the society will be done in 30 days, apart from this now the registration of the economizer

> Meanwhile, Congress has demanded extension of the duration of the assembly session.

will be done within 22 days.

## Investigation against 117 Professors having PhD degrees from fake Universities in Haryana

SATISH HANDA

Chandigarh

Information reveals that as many as 117 teachers employed in colleges in Haryana state allegedly obtained PhD degrees from private, fake Universities are facing investigation against them, since such degrees suspected to be fake have been found not meeting the norms of University Grant Commission (UGC). Information also reveals that on the direction of High Court Higher Education Department in the state had constituted a committee to start investigation as regard inspecting the invalid documents of such professors having such degrees with the Anti Corruption Bureau (ACB) in the state and take action against them allegedly producing fake, unrecognized degrees and take action against them or stop their promotions. The High Court also demanded



immediate action in this regard to bring the truth. A hearing of the case in this regard in the High Court was also held on January 22 this year regarding

action taken in this regard so far. Information also reveals that the High Court raised a question over delay in submitting the report to the court in this regard by the Additional Chief Secretary Vineet Garg and Rahul Hooda Director Higher Education in the state, both apologized for the delay and assured immediate action in this regard. According to information, a requirement

of a PhD degree is essential for the post of permanent as well as for the post of a professor on contract basis in a college. In the first stage, the investigation of nearly 2200 extension lecturers has been completed and a large number of extension lecturers having PhD degree from an unrecognized or a fake University were found, will have to leave the job. As a result of investigation going on several senior scales, selection grade lecturers are presently deprived of the increment demanding

immediate investigation, action

CBI or an independent agency Preliminary investigation also

revealed that large number of extension lecturers appointed in the colleges in the state have been appointed as guest lecturers in private colleges on the basis of such fake and unrecognized degrees between year 2007 and 2011, and many such guest teachers in spite of required ability were confirmed in their jobs under a policy during year 2014, in-spite of the fact they were not eligible and in most of the cases such teachers were having degree in a different subject when they are teaching in the college, although Bench of Justice Jindal in High Court had severely objected the same saying as a 'back-door' entry and the case is yet pending in Supreme Court of India decision in this regard.

## Who will become the Congress president and leader of opposition in Haryana?

**SATISH HANDA** New Delhi

CHANDIGARH: The decision to appoint the leader of the Congress Legislative Party and the state president in Haryana has been left to the Congress high command in Delhi under the chairmanship of BK Hariprasad. This decision was taken in a meeting of senior leaders of all factions of the state Congress chaired by Haryana affairs incharge BK Hariprasad. Haryana Congress after knowing the views of the leaders through one-to-one meetings held at the Congress headquarters in New Delhi on Wednesday discussed many issues including the leader of the Congress Legislature Party (CLP), state president, formation of the organization in Haryana were discussed. However, the party president Mallikarjun Kharge



Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi were also likely to attend the meeting, but they did not come. In such a situation, BK Hariprasad sought the opinion of all the leaders regarding the post of CLP leader and state president.

However, Some MLAs present in the meeting jointly presented their views and suggestions to the in-charge and many prominent Congress leaders met separately through one-to-one meetings to

and the leader of opposition in give their opinion to the senior party leaders regarding both the posts. Most of the MLAs present in the meeting said that the budget session is starting from March 7 since the previous session was also held without a leader of the opposition. In such a situation, the Congress high command leadership should decide on the CLP leader before the session begins. Since the CLP leader will become the Leader

of the Opposition, most of the

leaders of the Hooda camp have once again demanded that the former Chief Minister should be made the CLP leader. At the same time, the in-charge said that these MLAs and senior leaders should also talk to the central observers in this matter. Actually, the high command had appointed observers to select the leader of the Congress Legislature Party which included former Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot, senior certral party leaders Ajay Maken, TS Singhdev and Leader of Opposition in Punjab Assembly Pratap Singh The four leaders also con-

sulted all the MLAs at the state Congress headquarters in Chandigarh. The in-charge said that the central observers should give their report and the feedback of the MLAs in this regard to the leadership so that a decision can be taken on it.

## **Haryana Government Notifies 42 Services of Industries** and Commerce Department Under Right to Service Act **GULSHAN KUMAR**

Chandigarh

The Haryana Government has brought 42 services of the Industries and Commerce Department under the ambit of the Right to Service Act, 2014, with specified time limits for their delivery. Additionally, designated officers, first grievance redressal authorities and second grievance redressal authorities have been notified to ensure timely provision of these services. A notification to this effect was issued by Chief Secretary Anurag Rastogi. The move aims to enhance transparency and efficiency in the delivery of services to industries and businesses in Haryana.

Under the Indian Boilers Act,  $1923\,(\mathrm{Act}\,5\,\mathrm{of}\,1923),$  a time limit of 22 days has been set for the registration of boilers, while renewal of boiler registration will be completed within 15 days. Approval for the modification,



alteration and repair of boilers under the same Act has been assigned a timeline of 10 days.

For processing and trading under the Lubricating Oils and Greases (Processing, Supply, and Distribution Regulation) Order, 1987, provisional licences and full licences will be issued within 20 days. Similarly, renewals for processing and trading licenses will also adhere to a 20-day timeline.

Under the Indian Partnership Act, 1932 (Central Act 9 of 1932), firm registration will be completed in 7 days, approval for changes in partners in 3 days, and approval for changes in the

registered office in 3 days. For services under the Haryana Registration and Regulation of Societies Act, 2012 (Act 1 of 2012), approval of society names will take 3 days, approval for governing bodies 15 days, changes in society names or registered offices 7 days, and amendments to society bylaws 60 days. Registration of existing societies and approval of collegium schemes will be completed in 15 days, while changes in firm names and firm dissolution will take 7 days.

Mandatory annual returns under Section 50(1) of the Harvana Registration and Regulation of Societies Act, 2012, can be filed within 30 days. Resolutions for governing body/general body meetings also have a 30-day timeline. The list of elected collegium members under Section 30(3) must be submitted within 15 days, and nomination of members of registered societies will

be completed within 30 days.

and Fisheries Department and PWD Specifications Paper for SDO's Panchayati Raj Department (Engineering Group) will

Criminal Law for the candidates for the post of Assistant Commissioners, Extra Assistant Commissioners and E.A.Cs and Tehsildars, Procedure and Accounts for Forest Department and Group-1 Paper-B for Block Development and Panchayat Officers will be conducted on March 23, 2025 from 10.00 AM to 1.00 PM (morning session).

# India expresses concern over Dhaka PM Modi to Visit Mauritius on March 11-12, Confirms MEA releasing 'violent extremists'

voiced concerns over Bangladesh releasing certain "violent extremists" and underlined that it is the responsibility of the interim government to protect the Hindus and other minorities as well as their religious institutions.

New Delhi said it supports a "stable, peaceful, inclusive and progressive Bangladesh' in which all issues are resolved through democratic means and by holding inclusive and participatory elections.

"We remain concerned about the deteriorating law and order situation, further exacerbated by the release of violent extremists, who were sentenced for serious crimes, MEA spokesperson Randhir

India has repeatedly underlined that it is the responsibility of the interim government to protect the Hindus and other minorities, as well as their properties and religious institutions, he said.

"However, only 1,254 incidents out of over 2,374 inci-

Rahul Gandhi interacts

dents reported from August 5, 2024 to February 16, 2025 have been verified by the police. Further, 98 per cent of these 1,254 incidents were deemed 'political in nature',' he said. "We expect Bangladesh to thoroughly investigate and bring all perpetrators of killings, arson and violence to iustice without making such distinctions," he added.

There has been a sharp downturn in India-Bangladesh relations after deposed prime minister Sheikh Hasina fled

of a massive anti-government protest. The relations nosedived dramatically after the interim government headed by Muhammad Yunus failed to contain attacks on minorities, especially Hindus, in that

To a question, Jaiswal said development cooperation is a priority area for India in the context of its relations with the people of Bangladesh.

"The recent security situation and long-standing local issues have affected the pace

these projects," he said. "The official discussions therefore focused on rationalising the project portfolio and executing mutually agreed projects in a time bound man-

ner," he said. "Subject to obtaining the committed support and pending clearances from the Bangladesh side, we plan to take these projects forward," Jaiswal added

meeting of the joint committee constituted to oversee the implementation of the Ganga Water Treaty between India and Bangladesh was held on March 6 in Kolkata. "This routine technical

meeting, which is scheduled

He also said that the 86th

thrice annually, is part of an institutional structured mechanism associated with the implementation of the Treaty signed in 1996," he said. "At the meeting, the two

sides discussed technical issues pertaining to the Ganga Water Treaty, measurement of water flows and other issues Dhaka in August in the face of implementation of some of of mutual interest," he noted.



ter Narendra Modi will visit Mauritius on March 11-12 and attend the 57th National Day celebrations of Mauritius as the guest of honour, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) an-

"PM Modi will be in Mauritius on March 11 and 12 to attend the National Day celebrations of Mauritius, which falls on the 12th of March, as the Chief Guest. A contingent of Indian defence forces will participate in the celebrations along with a ship from the Indian Navy. The Prime Minister last visited Mauritius in 2015. During the visit, the Prime Minister will call on the President of Mauritius, meet with the Prime

Minister of Mauritius and hold several other meetings with important dignitaries and senior leaders from the country," Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal during a weekly media briefing in New Delhi on Friday.

Last month, Mauritius PM Navin Ramgoolam had informed the country's parliament about Prime Minister Modi's forthcoming visit.

"In the context of the celebrations of the 57th anniversary of the Independence of our country, I have great pleasure to inform the House, that following my invitation, His Excellency, Shri Narendra Modi, Prime Minister of India, has kindly agreed to be the Guest linkages.

**NEW DELHI:** Amid a row

over the duplicate Electors

Photo Identity Card (EPIC)

numbers to voters across

different states, the Election

Commission of India (ECI)

on Friday said it has taken

cognisance of the matter and

will resolve the issue in the

"Sample enquiry of over 100

electors reveals that electors

with duplicate EPIC numbers

are genuine electors. Since the

allotment of EPIC series in the

vear 2000 to the States/UTs.

some EROs did not use the

correct series," the Election

Commission said in a state-

ment. It said it has already

aken cognisance of the mat-

ter. "Irrespective of an EPIC

number, an elector who is

linked to the electoral roll of

a particular polling station can

cast his vote at that polling sta-

tion only and nowhere else,"

it said. "The issue of allotment

of duplicate numbers due to

incorrect series across States/

UTs could not have been de-

tected as the States/UTs were

independently managing the

electoral roll databases. The

Commission has now decided

next three months.

Amid row over duplicate voter IDs,

ECI to resolve issue in next 3 months

ELECTION COMMISSION OF INDIA

"It is indeed a singular privilege for our country, to host such a distinguished personality who is doing us this honour, in spite of his very tight schedule and in spite of his recent visits to Paris and the United States. He has agreed to be here as our special guest. The visit of Shri Modi is a testimony of the close relations between our two nations," the Mauritius PM added further.

PM Modi has underlined New Delhi's unwavering commitment to its special and enduring partnership with Mauritius, calling it terming it as 'special" and "unique".

In July 2024, External Affairs Minister (EAM) S. Jaishankar undertook a two-day visit to Mauritius — one of the first countries that he visited in his current term — holding extensive discussions with not only then PM Pravind Kumar Jugnauth but also Ramgoolam on various aspects of bilateral ties, including the development partnership, defence and maritime cooperation, economic and trade ties, and people-to-people

to resolve this long pending

issue after detailed discussions

within the technical teams and

concerned CEOs in the next

three months by ensuring a

unique national EPIC number

to the existing electors having

a duplicate EPIC number and

West Bengal Chief Minister

for future electors as well."

Mamata Banerjee last week ac-

cused the BJP of manipulating

the electoral rolls with the bless-

ings of the ECI and enrolling

people from Punjab, Haryana

and Gujarat as electors in West

Bengal. She had also asked her

party leaders to find out the fake

voters in ten days. The Elec-

tion Commission said India's

Electoral Rolls are the bigges

database of electors across the globe with over 99 crore regis-

tered electors. "In addition to

the continuous updation of

Electoral Rolls, the Election

Commission conducts An-

nual Special Summary Revi-

sion (SSR) exercise every year

for updation of electoral rolls

which happens during the

period of October-December

every year with the publication

of final rolls in the following

month of January," it said.

### **BJD leader Chakra** and his men loot Gandhamardhan mines in the name of cooperative



ARABINDA MOHAPATRA Bhubaneswar

Chickens are coming home to roost for Biju Janata Dal (BJD) leaders following their ouster from power. The Economic Offence Wing of Crime Branch on Monday grilled BJD leader Raja Chakra for his alleged involvement with office-bearers of Gandhamardan Loading Agency and Transporting Cooperative Society limited in connection with misappropriation of funds to the tune of Rs 35

The EOW had arrested former president Manas Ranjan Barik and secretary Utkal Das of Gandhamardan Agency, which is engaged in loading iron ore from the mines of Odisha Mining Corporation for their alleged role in the scam. They were arrested last month. Chakra was reportedly close to BJD strongman Pranab Prakash Das aka Bobby and IAS officer-turnedpolitician VK Pandian. There are allegations that he enjoyed their blessings.

The Gandhamardan agency was registered in 2006 and engaged in loading of iron ore from the mines in Keonjhar district. Investigation revealed that the operations of the society were monopolised by a handful of influential outsiders who entered into a conspiracy with the office-bearers to misappropriate crores of rupees between 2017 and 2024.

The accused reportedly forged documents pertaining to labour costs, employment provident fund deductions, money spent towards peripheral developmental activities, infrastructural expenses and payments made to the people affected in the mining area. According to EOW sources, a preliminary probe suggests Raja Chakra was one of the beneficiaries of the fraud. It is believed to be a massive scam and requires a thorough probe by agencies like the Income Tax department and Enforcement Directorate. Chakra, a local BJD leader in Keonjhar, is no stranger to controversies. In October 2021 a senior BJP leader had alleged that Chakra was behind the attack zhen two bike-borne n ants had hurled country-made bombs at his car while he was returning from a public meeting

in the district. According to latest reports, the EOW carried out simultaneous raids at six locations linked to Raja Chakra in Keonjhar, Koida, Dhamra, and Gopalpur on Wednesday. It is reported to have seized 200 'benami' accounts and 20 vehicles reportedly belonging to the BJD leader.

## Over 15,000 Jan Aushadhi Kendras offering medicines at 50-90 pc lower prices daily: Nadda in sales. Notably, the PMBJP

NEW DELHI: Over 15,000 Jan Aushadhi Kendras across the country are offering medicines at 50-90 per cent lower prices daily, said Union Health Minis-ter JP Nadda on Jan Aushadhi Diwas on Friday. Every year, March 7th is cel-

ebrated as 'Jan Aushadhi Diwas' to raise awareness about the scheme and promote the use of generic medicines. Over 15, 000 Jan Aushadhi

Kendras operate across India, benefiting more than 10 lakh people daily by offering medicines at 50-90 per cent lower prices, saving citizens nearly Rs 30, 000 crore so far, "said Nadda. "Under PM Narendra Modi's leadership, the Pradhan Mantri Jan Aushadhi Pariyoiana (PMBJP) has transformed healthcare and ensures affordable, high-quality medicines for all, "he added. Jan Aushadhi Kendras, set up under the PMBJP, is a public welfare ity through stringent quality

medicines at affordable prices to the masses. Launched in November 2008, the Scheme is being implemented through the Pharmaceuticals & Damp; Medical Devices Bureau of India

The PMBJP offers about "2, 047 drugs and 300 surgical items covering diverse therapeutic needs", Nadda said. The Union Minister added that "the PMBJP maintains sustainabil-

scheme, that provides quality checks, competitive procurement and robust supply chain managed by PMBI". Noting that the Kendras are "redefining affordable healthcare", Nadda informed of plans to "open 25, 000 Jan Aushadhi Kendras by March 31, 2027, across the country". Earlier this week, the Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilizers informed that the number of Jan Aushadhi Kendras has increased by 180 times in the last 10 years, and it has also witnessed a 200 times surge

made sales of Rs. 1, 470 crore (at MRP), leading to a savings of about Rs. 7, 350 crore to the citizens in the financial year

In the current financial year, 2024-25, PMBJP has made sales of Rs. 1, 760 Crore (at MRP) till February 28, the Ministry said. The week-long celebration began on March 1 with Nadda flagging off a Rath and vehicles to promote the PMBJP. Other activities held during the week included Jan Arogya Mela with heritage walks and over 500 health camps for senior citizens; children's participation and distributing nutraceutical products; women's involvement with sanitary pad distribution to showcase the affordability of Jan Aushadhi products; pharmacist awareness seminars in 30 cities; and the Jan Aushadhi Mitra Volunteer Registration Campaign.

## **Centre Notifies Scheme to Help Sugar Mills Produce More Ethanol for Green Push** Jammu & Kashmir

**NEW DELHI:** The Centre has notified the scheme for increasing the financial viability of cooperative sugar mills through interest subvention on bank loans for converting their existing sugarcane-based ethanol plants to multi-feedstock units, according to an official statement issued on Friday.

This conversion allows the sugar mills to use maize and damaged food grains, ensuring year-round ethanol production and improved efficiency. The initiative aligns with the Ethanol Blended Petrol (EBP) Programme, targeting 20 per cent ethanol blending with pet-

Under this modified Ethanol



Interest Subvention Scheme, the government is facilitating entrepreneurs with interest subvention at the rate of 6 per cent per annum or 50 per cent of the rate of interest charged on loans given to them by banks and financial institutions, whichever is lower. The cost of the interest waiver is being borne by the Central government for five years including a one-year

moratorium, the statement said.

The sugarcane crushing period is limited to 4-5 months only in a year due to which sugar mills can operate for a limited

period of time. This further leads to a reduction in their overall operational efficiency and productivity. To ensure the functioning of cooperative sugar mills throughout the year, their existing ethanol plants can be converted into multi-feedstock-based plants to use grains like maize and damaged foodgrains under the

new modified scheme.

future amendments. On the restoration of statehood, Mir stated that reinstating Jammu and Kashmir's status would empower the chief minister, strengthen democracy, and address several regional concerns. He welcomed Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha's remarks on statehood, saying they had generated fresh hope among the people, and urged Prime Minister Narendra Modi to fulfill his commitment to J&K's political future. Ghulam Ahmed Mir also criticized the  $central\ government \hbox{'s approach}$ to special status, noting that states like Bihar and Andhra

Pradesh had sought and were

being considered for special

packages in exchange for politi-

cal support.



JAMMU: Congress Legislature Party (CLP) leader Ghulam Ahmed Mir on March 4 strongly advocated for a caste census in Jammu and Kashmir, arguing that it would help determine the exact population of various communities and ensure equitable distribution of benefits.

Speaking during the Motion of Thanks on the Lieutenant Governor's address in the J&K Assembly, Mir also reiterated the Congress's demand for full statehood with legal and constitutional safeguards for locals in government jobs and land ownership. Mir emphasized that the abrogation of Article 370 should not mark the end of J&K's special provisions and urged the government to explore new legal frameworks for safeguards. He pointed out that constitutional amendments continue to evolve and suggested that fresh provisions for J&K could be introduced through

## Guarantees not freebies, are strategic investments in social concern: CM Siddaramaiah presents budget

BENGALURU: Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Friday sent out a clear message to continue the guarantees despite the criticism by the opposition and a section of party leaders by announcing that the guarantees are not freebies, they are strategic investments made on economic and social The CM said this while pre-

senting the state budget for the financial year 2025-26 at the Legislative Assembly on Fridav. It is CM Siddaramaiah's 16th budget, the highest by any leader in the state.

CM Siddaramaiah sought the permission of the Speaker U.T. Khader to sit and read out the budget after making opening remarks. He began the budget presentation with lines from poets Kuvempu and Gopalakrishna Adiga.

He stated, "I am pleased to present the budget for the year 2025-26 before the Assembly. The budget is not merely a lifeless exercise of adding and subtracting numbers. I stand here with the utmost understanding that I carry a huge responsibility of putting forward our promises made to the seven crore people of the state, breathing the hopes of a better life."

"This budget reaffirms our



commitment to fulfil the dreams of every citizen of the state, creating hopes for tomorrow, and honouring our promise to Walk the Talk'. It embodies Mahatma Gandhi's vision that the welfare of all is achievable through a sustainable and just economy and showcases the government's dedication to social and economic equality," CM Siddaramaiah stated.

He further said that the principle of the beast, "Survival of the Fittest" is often referred to as 'Social Darwinism'. On the contrary to this, Babasaheb Dr. B.R. Ambedkar framed our Constitution to build a nation founded with the hope of an equal society built on the foundation of humanity. Behind our Constitution lie the dreams of philosophers like Buddha,

Basavanna, Narayana Guru, and others. Inspired by their vision, we are leading the state with unwavering commitment. Our government is firmly resolved to continue securing the foundation of social justice, "he underlined.

"The government has the responsibility to ensure that available resources are accessible to everyone. By balancing economic development with people's welfare, we are shaping Karnataka's development model through the concept of Universal Basic Income. Many of the welfare programmes we offer, including the five guarantees, are not merely freebies; I can confidently say that these are strategic investments made on economic and social principles,

## with coolies at New Delhi Railway station, pledges to fight for their rights



Wednesday expressed deep concern over the rising number of stampedes at railway stations after interaction with coolies who helped passengers during the February 15 tragedy. Saddened by their plight, Ra-

hul Gandhi said he would fight for their rights with all his might. In a post on X, he highlighted the tragic consequences of such incidents, stating, "The increasing number of stampedes at railway stations and other public places is a matter of great concern. Many innocent people lose their lives or suffer injuries in these unfortunate events. We need to come together and find ways to prevent such tragedies".

participation in addressing the issue, urging people to share their suggestions on improving crowd management and enhancing security at railway stations. "If you have any ideas to improve crowd management, strengthen security, or suggest any other measures, please share them. We will listen to the voice of India!" he added. Along with his post, the Congress leader shared a video of his interaction with coolies at New Delhi Railway Station, acknowledging their critical role in assisting passengers during emergencies. He met with them to personally thank them for their courageous efforts during the February 15 stampede, which claimed 18 lives.

### Controversy over delinking of Biju 'Jayanati' from Panchayati Raj Divas ARABINDA MOHAPÁTRA Bhubaneswar A major controversy has erupted over BJP government's

decision to delink former chief minister Biju Patnaik's birth anniversary that falls on March 5 from Panchayati Rai Divas. The day has been celebrated as Panchayati Raj Divas since 1993 to honour the late leader's contribution to the strengthening of panchayati Raj institutions. However, the new BJP

government of the state decided to celebrate Biju Babu's anniversary but not as PR Divas because it argues that the national panchayati raj divas falls on April 24 and there should not be a clash between the two. However, leaders of Biju

Janata Dal (BJD), which has been named after Biju Patnaik and is led by his son Naveen Patnaik, have slammed the Mohan Majhi government for delinking his anniversary from PR Divas celebration and described it as petty politics by the saffron party leaders.



organise state-wide protests over the issue on March 6. Congress, too, disapproved of Mohan Majhi-led government's decision accusing it of disrespecting a towering leader like Biju Patnaik who was among one of the builders of modern Odisha. The BJP government has also scrapped the customary public holiday on March 5.

But it has sought to justify its decision on the ground that observance of March 5 as "Panchayati Raj Divas" in Odisha and celebration of National Panchayati Raj Day on April

overcome this inconsistency at the national and state levels in the celebration of Panchayati Raj Day the state government has decided to no longer celebrate March 5 as Panchayati Raj Day in Odisha and will instead celebrate it on April 24," a statement from the chief minister's office said. However, the government has decided to celebrate March 5 as Biju Patnaik's birth anniversary.

The BJD criticized the move saying that the BJP, which was voted to power on the plank of Odia Asmita (pride), has dishonoured one of the great Patnaik.

sons of the state who was one of the authors of the three tier panchayati raj system in Odisha and was the first leader to reserve 33 per cent seats for women in these institutions. Later this quota was enhanced to 50 percent by Naveen Patnaik. The BJD has described it as

an attempt to erase the legacy of Biju Babu who was twice the chief minister of the state and was acceptable to leaders cutting across parties. "They think they can erase his legacy by doing this but they are wrong. Biju Babu will always remain in the hearts of the people of Odisha who will give this government a fitting reply in the next elections," said a senior BJD leader.

Former chief minister and leader of opposition Naveen Patnaik, who ruled the state for 24 years before losing out to the BJP in the last elections, also targeted the government for delinking his father's birth

anniversary from PR Divas. " They can't take Biju Babu out of people's hearts," said

## **Congress demands** caste census in





## Heal pharma: Restore trust in India's medicine

he pharmacy of the global South is facing a reputation crisis, and recent incidents have put India's pharmaceutical industry under intense scrutiny. The deaths of children in The Gambia, Uzbekistan, and Cameroon due to contaminated cough syrups, and cases of blindness and fatalities in the United States due to tainted Indian-made eye drops, have raised serious concerns about drug safety and regulatory oversight. The latest revelation, uncovered by a BBC Eye investigation, further tarnishes this image, exposing criminal malpractice by Aveo Pharmaceuticals, a Maharashtra-based firm. Aveo Pharmaceuticals was found to be manufacturing and exporting unapproved, highly addictive opioid drug combinations to West Africa, despite these drugs having no legal clearance in India. The company produced a mix of tapentadol (a strong opioid) and carisoprodol (a muscle relaxant), which is not approved as a combination by India's Central Drugs Standard Control Organization (CDSCO). Even if the State drug authority had granted approval, such a move would still be illegal, as only the CDSCO has the authority to clear new fixed-dose combination (FDC) drugs. While India previously denied the World Health Organization's report on the contaminated cough syrup crisis, the swift action taken by the CDSCO and the State drug authority in response to the BBC's irrefutable video evidence shows a willingness to hold violators accountable. The seizure of 13 million tablets and 26 batches of active pharmaceutical ingredients points to the scale of this illicit trade, making it imperative that criminal action follows. The Indian pharmaceutical industry is globally recognized for its high-quality generic drugs, and it is the responsibility of regulators to ensure that this reputation remains intact. Strict enforcement, stringent penalties, and an unwavering commitment to drug safety are necessary to prevent the industry from becoming synonymous with dangerous synthetic opioids. The integrity of India's pharma sector must not be compromised for illicit profits.

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"Anger comes from a rude mind that must be softened by love and compassion."

## THE FINANCIAL WORLD

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**EDITOR\* ABDUL WASEY** 

(\*RESPONSIBLE FOR SELECTION OF NEWS UNDER THE PRB ACT)

## **ARINDAM GOSWAMI** EXPLAINS HOW INDIA CAN LEARN FROM AI STRATEGIES OF GLOBAL LEADERS



## AI infra: The new battleground

e United States has made a bold move in the global artificial intelligence (AI) race with its new federal AI infrastructure policy. What appears to be a domestic initiative to establish AI data centres across federal lands, is actually a well-thought-out strategy to maintain America's technological supremacy in this field. Other countries have also developed their own AI infrastructure strategies to face this competition. India faces resource constraints.

The challenge for India, therefore, lies in adopting a strategy which will work without

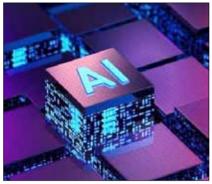
the deep financial reserves of the U.S. or China.

AI can be considered to be a technology in the mould of general purpose technologies (GPTs) that Jeffrey Ding has described in his GPT Diffusion Theory. It has a pervasive impact on different sectors, and requires a comprehensive infrastructure, including skill infrastructure, to thrive and diffuse.

The U.S. policy aims at national security and AI leadership at its core. This is not just about building data centres. It is about building enough infrastructure domestically to ensure that research and development in this field can progress without any impediments. It can help strengthen America's position as the global AI gatekeeper, if it can control the compute or resources layer of the AI technology stack. However, does not this raise important questions about the future of technological cooperation in an interconnected world? This throws to the wind the traditional concepts of market forces and comparative advantages which should be driving the allocation of resources globally. Are these to be superseded by national security concerns?

The answer is not straightforward. Technonationalism is here to stay, where a country's worth is decided by its technological prowess. The U.S. has already imposed restrictions on the export of high-end AI chips to China. This highlights the geopolitical dimensions of AI infrastructure development.

The world will see a lot of this competitive



one-upmanship in the garb of narratives of self-sufficiency and technological leadership. It would be better for nations to do a comprehensive cost-benefit analysis of such decisions to be able to harmonise national interests with global partnerships.

China also has invested heavily in domestic AI chip manufacturing and governmentbacked AI research. Companies such as Huawei and the Semiconductor Manufacturing International Corporation (SMIC) are at the forefront of developing indigenous alternatives to Nvidia's AI chips, ensuring that China is not entirely dependent on western technology. A lot of this is driven by creative insecurity brought on by the tech and trade wars unleashed by the U.S. In addition, China, too, has aggressively been expanding its data centre networks, integrating AI computing with its broader push for digital infrastructure dominance under the Belt and Road Initiative. These are different models of doing the same thing — establishing AI supremacy. Unlike the U.S., which is leveraging public-private partnerships, China's model is deeply statedriven, with massive subsidies and policy support ensuring rapid progress. One could argue that both are market distorting interventions.

The European Union is also taking AI infrastructure seriously but with a focus on ethics, regulation, and sustainability. They have been

investing in sovereign cloud infrastructure to reduce reliance on foreign multi-national companies. Additionally, it is actively promoting open-source AI models. The aim is to keep AI development transparent and accessible to smaller businesses and researchers.

#### The issue of sustainability

The U.S. has also dabbled with such an approach. Consider this policy's environmental stance. There is a commitment to power nextgeneration data centres with clean energy. This is not how traditional infrastructure development happens. However, the Trump administration's track record on climate issues has not been great. It has withdrawn from the Paris Agreement, among other such reckless actions. Hence, this policy's environmental stance may indeed change in the future, and needs to be taken with a huge pinch of salt. Recent studies indicate that energy consumption for running AI infrastructure will most likely rise exponentially. Innovations such as the DeepSeek model, which showcased a lot of efficiency improvements, do give a lot of hope that this may not be the case entirely. However, it would be prudent to err on the side of caution, and consider sustainability options.

The U.S. policy also explicitly addresses community interests and worker benefits. It acknowledges that technological advancement must not disregard broader societal interests. If this approach could create new tech hubs beyond Silicon Valley, it could potentially help in spreading the benefits of the AI revolution more equitably across the country. However, the Trump administration did also recently rescind a previous executive order which mandated a bunch of disclosures on AI developers to share the results of safety tests with the U.S. government. The balance between innovation and safety regulation is tough to achieve.

#### What India must do

For countries such as India, these diverse

approaches offer valuable lessons. The model of utilising government lands for AI infrastructure development through public-private partnerships, by leasing out federal lands, could be particularly relevant, instead of, say, government procuring GPUs. India cannot afford to match the U.S. or China in sheer financial might. It needs to adopt a strategic, targeted and collaborative approach to AI infrastructure development, which leverages its strengths

One of India's biggest strengths is its vast talent pool in AI and software development. India does not yet have a robust AI hardware industry. However, it is already a major hub for cloud computing services, and software engineering. The presence of global AI firms in India, combined with domestic giants such as TCS and Infosys investing n AI, could provide a foundation that can be leveraged. However, for this potential to be realised, India needs to develop the necessary computing infrastructure to support AI innovation at scale.

A major challenge is India not having highend AI chips and large-scale computing power. India could partner with U.S. and European firms to establish joint AI computing hubs in India. It helps India to participate in the lobal AI economy without needing to invest oillions in semiconductor fabs.

The next important factor is India's energy constraints. AI data centres require a huge amount of power. India, at its level of economic development, has to make hard choices between expanding energy access for industrial growth and dedicating power to AI computing. A viable path forward is to integrate AI data centres with renewable energy projects, balancing both imperatives, and creating a sustainable AI growth model.

Arindam Goswami is a Research Analyst in the High-Tech Geopolitics Programme at The Takshashila Institution, Bengaluru. Views are personal.

PHILIP GREEN SAYS AUSTRALIA HAS EXPERTISE, RESOURCES, AND COMMITMENT TO SUPPORT INDIA

# Australia-India economic collaboration deepens

ustralia believes in India. We believe that India has a bright future economically. We believe that it will be the third biggest economy in the world by 2030. And we believe that India warrants greater political influence as its economy grows — that is why we back India's claim for a seat on the United Nations Security Council.

We also believe that Australia is a natural partner for India's growth because our economies are complementary (we produce the things India needs, and vice versa); because we are strategically aligned; and because we are neighbours just across the Indian Ocean.

### The new Roadmap, the next phase of ties

For these reasons, Australian Prime Minlaunched the New Roadmap for Australia's Economic Engagement with India. The Roadmap sets out how Australia can contribute to, and benefit from, India's phenomenal growth. Put simply, the Roadmap says that Australia believes in the Indian growth narrative, and the Roadmap then goes on to articulate how Australia has the skills, the resources and the commitment to support that narrative.

The Roadmap builds on the successful effort from our last economic strategy in 2018. But a lot has changed since then.

Fuelled by our free trade agreement, the Economic Cooperation and Trade Agreement (ECTA), the India-Australia relationship has grown at the high end of our expectations. Take this one telling statistic.



India's exports to the world have grown by 35% in the last five years. Not bad, right? But India's exports to Australia have grown by 66% — nearly twice as fast as India's exports to the rest of the world

That is because India is growing in ways that are complementary to Australia's own Australia produces the things that India

will need for the next chapter of its growth - the energy to power the Indian economy; the resources (including the critical minerals) to power India's manufacturing drive; and the training capabilities that India needs to skill up the next generation of Indian professionals and workers.

The Roadmap charts the next phase of our partnership, and showcases how Australia can be part of India's economic story. It identifies four sectors — the "Superhighways of growth" — where the Australia-India partnership is most prospective. Those superhighways of growth are: clean energy; education and skills; agribusiness and tourism.

The Roadmap also describes another seven 'major economic roads' to mutual

prosperity: investment; tech; sports; culture and the arts; resources; defence; space and health. These are the fields in which our complementary capabilities can be most naturally leveraged.

In framing our partnership, we are listening closely to India's ambitions. A great example is India's ambition for manufacturing electric vehicles. When India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi talks about the number of electric vehicles growing eight-fold in India by 2030, Australia responds that we have the critical minerals and raw earth metals to realise that goal. Australia is the largest lithium producer in the world, and has the world's second largest reserves of nickel and cobalt.

### Support for India's skill needs

We are also listening carefully to Indian India needs to equip two crore Indians every year with the right skills and qualifications to maximise its growth. Australian universities are listening, and are gearing up to provide the high-quality training needed to support Indian ambitions. Australian universities have been the first foreign universities to open campuses here in India — in Gujarat International Finance Tech (GIFT) city, and shortly in Noida (Uttar Pradesh), and more will follow in the coming years.

Australia also boasts a 'super power' when it comes to economic engagement with India. That super power is the Indian diaspora, already 10 lakh strong and the fastest growing population group in our country. Many of these Indian-Australians are prominent leaders in business, government and the

community. And our new Centre for Australia India Relations, with Rs 132 crore worth of support from our government, is, appropriately, headed by two eminent Australians of Indian origin. Our Prime Minister stood beside one of them as he launched the Roadmap

### The Indian diaspora is a bridge

The Indian diaspora in Australia is an invaluable asset. Indian-Australians deepen our understanding of each other and spark business opportunities. Because our government understands the value of this human bridge' (as Mr. Modi calls it), we are investing another Rs 22 crore into our hugely successful Maitri grants program. This programme works to maximise the potential of our diaspora links. The Roadmap signals to for further opportunities to partner with Indian counterparts, for mutual benefit.

And as they do that, it becomes even more important that we progress our Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement (CECA), building a higher platform for the next stage of our economic partnership.

As the Australian Prime Minister says "Australia's relationship with India is stronger, deeper and more consequential than it has ever been — but there is much more to come. What is truly exciting is the sheer scale of the opportunities in the near future if we get things right in the present... With this Roadmap, the way ahead looks a lot clearer.'

Philip Green is Australia's High Commissioner to India. Views are personal.

BOOKS: REVIEW

## Jadhav's book dives deep into Ambedkar's blueprint for India

arendra Jadhav's Dr. Ambedkar: The Man Who Shaped India's Democratic Republic is an extensively researched and compelling account of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's life, work, and enduring impact on Indian democracy. The book not only delves into Ambedkar's pivotal role in drafting the Indian Constitution but also highlights his lifelong battle for justice, equality, and representation for the Depressed Classes. Jadhav presents a meticulously detailed narrative, making the book an essential read for those interested in constitutional history, social justice, and Indian politics.

The book strongly emphasizes that Dr. Ambedkar's life was inseparable from his work. His mission to introduce fairness and equality into India's political and social framework shaped his every action. Jadhav expertly illustrates how Ambedkar's legal acumen and political foresight made him the most qualified and essential figure in drafting the Indian Constitution. The book is divided into four parts, of his contributions, from his early advocacy to his chairmanship of the Drafting Committee.

Jadhav simplifies the complex process of constitutional reforms, making it accessible to readers unfamiliar with the subject. He explores the two parallel tracks that influenced India's constitutional evolution—the British legislative process (beginning with the Southborough Committee in 1919) and the Swadeshi movement's constitutional vision (from the Swaraj Bill of 1895 to the Congress's Nehru Report in 1928). Dr. Ambedkar uniquely contributed to both tracks, a fact often overlooked in mainstream narratives.

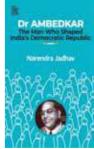
Despite political opposition and attempts to sideline him, Ambedkar strategically inserted his vision into every available forum, ensuring that the Depressed Classes secured representation and fundamental rights. His political resilience and tactical brilliance ensured that India's legal framework was not just a

each of which explores different facets mechanical exercise of governance but a progressive blueprint for social justice.

One of the book's highlights is Jadhav's analysis of the criticisms against the Indian Constitution at the time of its drafting. Many opponents dismissed it as unoriginal, to which Dr. Ambedkar's sharp rebuttal was that constitutional principles are universal, and the real challenge lies in adapting them to the nation's specific needs.

Ambedkar was not just a visionary leader but also a dedicated executor. His work as the Chairman of the Drafting Committee involved gruelling efforts-he was a member of two committees and two sub-committees, particularly on fundamental rights and minority rights, in addition to leading the Constitution's three readings in the Constituent Assembly. In today's terminology, he would be referred to as the chief architect and "penholder" of India's Constitution.

Ambedkar's commitment to democratic values extended beyond



Dr. Ambedkar: Shaped India's By Narendra **Publishers** 264 pages; Rs 1,299.

political governance. His push for comprehensive social reform, particularly women's rights, was evident in his work on the Hindu Code Bill, which proposed: Equal inheritance rights for daughters; The principle of monogamy; and Greater protections for women's legal rights.

Faced with intense opposition from conservative forces, the bill was withdrawn at the last moment, leading to Ambedkar's resignation as Law Minister in 1951. This moment, as Jadhav portrays, was a breaking point for a liberal democrat, highlighting his frustration with entrenched societal resistance to progressive change.

Jadhav's book makes a compelling implicit argument—that Dr. Ambedkar was not only the right person to draft India's Constitution because he represented the marginalized, but also because he was the most qualified expert in constitutional law and governance. His dual doctorates in economics from Columbia University and the London School of Economics equipped him with a rare combination of legal, economic, and administrative expertise.

One intriguing counterfactual that Jadhav hints at-but does not explicitly explore—is: "What if Ambedkar had been India's first Finance Minis-ter instead of Law Minister?" Given his deep understanding of economic policy, one wonders how India's financial trajectory might have differed under his leadership. Dr. Ambedkar: The Man Who Shaped India's Democratic Republic is not just a biography but a political and constitutional analysis that cements Ambedkar's legacy as the true architect of modern India. Jadhav's accessible writing style, rich historical references, and deep research make this book a must-read for anyone interested in India's democratic foundations, social justice move-

ments, and political evolution. This book does not idolize Ambedkar-rather, it presents a fact-based case for why his role was indispensable. It highlights his challenges, triumphs, and sacrifices, making it a timely reminder of the values that India must uphold today.

### DGFT highlights urgent need for SEBI using Technology in Big Way to Trade and Industrial Policy Review **Protect Investors: Tuhin Kanta Pandey**

Tuhin Kanta Pandey said on Friday that the capital markets regulator aims to improve efficiency and transparency to protect investors with the support of technology.

Speaking at a media event here, Pandey said, "SEBI has taken measures to reduce risk in the system to protect investors. Broadly, the reforms are aimed at improving efficiency and transparency in the market. For this, the regulator has used technology in a big way."

He said the capital markets regulator would continue to work on enhancing investor awareness. There is a need to make people aware of risk, wealth management and how to balance the two by knowing how best to allocate their capital across segments, both equity

**Electronics Industry** 

**Seeks Zero-Duty Trade** 

**Pact amid US Tariff Hike** 

**NEW DELHI:** Industry leaders

expressed optimism on Thursday

regarding the development of a

well-structured Bilateral Trade

Agreement (BTA) between India

and the United States, despite

the impending implementation

of reciprocal tariffs by the US ad-

ministration scheduled for April

2. India currently imposes a 16.5

percent basic customs duty (BCD)

and surcharge on smartphones

and electronics imported from

the United States. Simultane-

ously, the country is building a

robust domestic manufacturing

ecosystem by focusing on four

interconnected pillars: infra-

structure development, techno-

logical modernisation, workforce

skill development, and strategic

market access to drive demand

and growth. Pankaj Mohindroo,

Chairman, India Cellular and

Electronics Association (ICEA),

stated that offering reciprocal

zero duty in the potential BTA

for smartphones, hearables, wear-

electronics, appliances, and light-

ing, "is not an extraordinary step

for us since we already provide

that treatment to FTAs with Ja-

nam, Thailand, Indonesia etc.)."



and debt, he added.

"An informed investor is well protected. SEBI's efforts in the days ahead would be to create awareness among both existing and prospective investors, Pandey remarked.

Pandey acknowledged the role that domestic investors are playing in improving the resilience of the capital markets and said that the regulator also

wants to support foreign investments. He said that, to grow at the speed that is aimed for, "we need both domestic and foreign investments". "We at SEBI are conscious about the need to create conducive environment to attract foreign capital. We will be happy to engage with FPI and AIF industry participants to address their difficulties and further rationalise regulations

he said. Pandey also said that the SEBI won't be aiming for "maximum regulations" but for "optimal regulations" in its approach to oversee the markets.

He said that he looks forward to engaging with all stakeholders to discuss what more needs to be done to encourage voluntary compliance.

Pandey further stated that reforms to improve the functioning of the capital markets need not necessarily be big band reforms as small incremental reforms can also be important. Going forward, SEBI will use a right mix to both to achieve the objective, he added.

He also highlighted that the

number of unique investors in SEBI's ecosystem has surged from 49 million in March 2020,

with over 900 aircraft on order and has the largest recipient of 58 new Airbus aircraft during 2024. However, it also states that the airline does have a large proportion (approximately 80

While 88 per cent of IndiGo's

**NEW DELHI:** Santosh Kumar the United States, European Sarangi, Director-General of Foreign Trade has called for a comprehensive review of the country's trade and industrial policies, highlighting significant challenges that threaten the nation's export ambitions.

He emphasised the urgent need for strategic recalibration in light of increasingly competitive global markets.

The export landscape is rapidly changing, with advanced economies implementing aggressive industrial policies.

The United States has introduced the Inflation Reduction Act and CHIPS Act, while the United Kingdom has developed an Advanced Manufacturing Plan, and the European Union has launched its green deal. These developments create a more complex environment for Indian exporters.

The challenges are multifaceted. More than 40 per cent of India's exports are directed to

Logistics inefficiency further undermines competitiveness, with India's logistics costs reaching 8-9 per cent of GDP, compared to 5-6 per cent in advanced economies.

high import tariffs.

Exporters face additional hurdles, including low credit coverage, high interest rates, insufficient branding, and limited market outreach. Export credit currently covers only 28.5 per cent of total merchandise exports, amounting to USD 124.7 billion, while the estimated requirement is USD 284 billion for projected exports of USD 437 billion. markets where domestic

The government is responding with targeted interventions. Schemes are being developed to support micro, small, tariff barriers, including the and medium enterprise exporters, including easier credit terms and alternative financ-Manufacturing remains a ing instruments.

The upcoming budget infacturing sector has stagnated troduces BharatTradeNet, a unified platform for trade documentation and financing five years, significantly lagging solutions.

The Export Credit Guarantee Corporation of India currently provides insurance cover for only USD 44.9 billion of the total export credit, South Korea at 24 per cent, prompting calls to reconsider its monopolistic structure.

As India aims to achieve its ambitious USD 2 trillion export target, a holistic and strategic approach will be crucial in navigating the complex global trade landscape.

**SEBI warns Public** against Dealing with Sunshine Global Agro's **Properties** 



and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) on Thursday warned the public against buying or dealing with any properties belonging to Sunshine Global Agro and

The market regulator issued this cautionary notice after discovering that some individuals or entities were illegally purchasing, encroaching, or trespassing on the company's properties. In a notice issued last week, Sebi stated that no person is allowed to take illegal possession of or trespass on the assets of Sunshine Global Agro and its directors. The regulator also warned that any unauthorised actions would lead to legal consequences under applicable laws. Sebi had taken action against Sunshine Global Agro in July 2014, when it prohibited the company and its directors from raising funds from investors or launching any new schemes. This decision came after Sebi found that the company was mobilising funds through schemes related to the "sale of Jatropha Bush Group and sale

of plant/trees.'

These activities were classified as an unauthorised Collective Investment Scheme (CIS). Later, in February 2019, Sebi directed Sunshine Global Agro and its directors not to sell or dispose of any company assets, except for the purpose of refunding investors. However, since the company failed to comply with the order, Sebi initiated recovery proceedings against it and its directors. Meanwhile, the market regulator in December 2020 ordered the attachment of bank and demat accounts of Sunshine Global Agro and its directors to recover dues of over Rs 1 crore. The action was taken after the company and its directors failed to pay a Rs 1 crore penalty imposed by SEBI in March 2019. The fine was levied after the company was found to have illegally raised over Rs 38 crore from 39,290 investors through unregistered collective investment schemes. In its attachment notice issued

## IndiGo ranked world's 2nd fastest growing airline in seat capacity

**NEW DELHI:** IndiGo Airlines has emerged as the world's second fastest-growing airline in terms of seat capacity, which increased by 10.1 per cent year-on-year to over 134.9 million seats in 2024.

India's largest airline has been ranked next only to Qatar Airways, which clocked a 10.4 per cent growth in seat capacity over the previous year, according to the latest data from the Official Airline Guide (OAG). IndiGo has also been ranked as the fastest-growing airline



frequency growth at 9.7 per cent year-on-year in 2024. The airline recorded a flight frequency of 749, 156 for the year, the figures show. OAG has also recorded that IndiGo holds one of the world's largest aircraft orders,

aircraft) inactive with MROrelated supply chain issues.

capacity is allocated to domestic markets, international growth is a key part of the airline's strategy with expansion during 2024 focused on regional Middle East

## Electric Cars deployed at NITI Aayog under CESL's 'EV as a Service'

20 E-Cars deployed by CESL with Drivers at NITI Aayog **TANVIR KAUR** 

Union, and United Kingdom,

manufacturers are becoming

are likely to face growing non-

Carbon Border Adjustment

critical concern. India's manu-

at 13-14 per cent of gross do-

mestic product over the past

behind regional competitors.

manufacturing contributes

26 per cent to its GDP, while

Thailand stands at 25 per cent,

and Vietnam at 23 per cent.

compound these challenges.

The country struggles with

insufficient global value chain

integration, lack of scale, tech-

nological disadvantages, and

Structural impediments

In comparison, China's

Mechanism.

Additionally, Indian exports

increasingly competitive.

New Delhi

In a significant step towards achieving Govt's target of Net Zero by 2070, 20 E-Cars were flagged at NITI Aayog today. The E-Cars were flagged off by Sudhendu J. Sinha, Advisor, Infrastructure Connectivity & Electric Mobility, NITI Aayog, K. S. Rejimon, Joint Secretary - Administration, NITI Aayog, Vishal Kapoor, MD & CEO, CESL and Rajneesh Rana, Head (Convergence), CESL..

**CESL** (Convergence Energy Services Limited), a subsidiary of Energy Efficiency Services Limited (EESL), which operates under the



this 'EV as a Service' initiative. Under this initiative, New E-Cars are deployed with end-to-end solution including repair & maintenance, while complying with all the rules and regulations related to Motor Vehicle Act, Workmen/Driver/ Labour Laws, Make-In-India, GFR guidelines, etc. There is no upfront cost from the beneficiary and lease payments are made on a monthly basis for a period upto

#### in 2020. SEBI instructed banks and depositories not to allow any debits from the accounts of the company and its directors.

## **Broad-based and Inclusive Financial Approach Crucial for Economic Growth & Social equity: Anita Shah Akella**

**FW DESK** 

Financial inclusion encompasses key elements such as access to the payment system, credit, insurance and investment opportunities, all of which require government policies for an effective implementation. To achieve the vision of developed India by 2047, we need a broad-based and inclusive financial approach as a crucial wheel for the growth ables, color televisions, consumer of the economy and social equity. Said Anita Shah Akella, CEO- IEPF Authority & Joint Secretary, Ministry of Corporate Affairs, GoI at the 3rdNational pan, Korea and ASEAN (Viet-Conclave on Financial Inclusion organised by ASSOCHAM.



"The JAM (Jan Dhan, Aadhar, Mobile) Trinity has made access to banking so easy and simple for everyone, making the world take note. Innovations both in the public and private sectors have driven digital financial inclusion and policy measures and initiatives have been instrumental in making the financial services more ac-

cessible. Financial institutions themselves have played a crucial role in promoting inclusivity, particularly through the microfinance services that cater to the low-income population. The expansion of the digital transaction platforms and services like the immediate payment services, IMPS and the digital wallets have made transactions more seamless, secure and cost effective, "she said.

"Along with financial inclusion, there is a need for financial literacy and organisations such as IEPFA, BSE, SEBI, RBI are working to spread financial literacy to the people. Programs like 'Niveshak Didi' and "Niveshak Sarthi' have been instrumental in driving financial literacy especially among women", she added Sharing his insights on

financial inclusion, PR Seshadri, MD & CEO, South Indian Bank Ltd. said, "Financial inclusion begins with access, and we must applaud the stellar role played by the nationalized banking system in making access so ubiquitous. Today, the levels of access that we have in our country is significantly higher than our competitors in a similar state of being. Interest rates in the country have moderated significantly highlighting the

stitutions, NGOs, and govern- through Lepra Society, prement agencies to enhance the vention and strengthening outreach of CSR initiatives of of primary healthcare service among top 25 listed pharthe company. Besides Cipla through Mamta HIMC at Sir-Foundation, there are two mour districts of Himachal other kev entities namely Chest Research Foundation (formerly known as Hamied Foundation) and Cipla Cancer

& AIDS Foundation. formed as a Section 8 Company, the UNM Foundation founder – U. N. Mehta. The UNM Foundation is involved areas such as Healthcare, Education, Ecology, Arts, Culture, and social well-being. CSR stood at Rs 44.0 Crore.

Mankind Pharma spent Rs

Pradesh are just few notable initiatives.

The Lupin Human Welfare and Research Foundation was established in 1988 by The Torrent Group runs Lupin Founder – Dr. Desh a not-for profit organization Bandhu Gupta. This was set up to promote good health and foster economic growth which is named after the through sustainable livelihood in India's most marginalized regions. Lupin Foundation set up by Lupin Limited served over 1,405 villages across eight states in FY24. Lupin Limited could not set-up a state-ofthe-art Hospital in Mumbai so the company had decided to

de-register Lupin Foundation. Zydus Lifesciences has set up Zydus Foundation, a Section 8 wholly owned subsidiary of the company and has in place. The Company has areas of interest relevant for also established Zydus Red Cross Experiential Centre in pany. collaboration with Red Cross Society with an objective to create awareness for blood donation. For FY24, the company spent Rs 13.31 Crore on CSR activities. Through Zydus Medical College and Hospital

CSK by Pharmaceutical Companies and Engagement with SHGs, NGOs & Foundations

Aurobindo Pharma reported that 8.59 Lakh lives have been impacted through CSR interventions in FY24 itself. In FY24, Rs 37.3 Crore investment has been made in CSR initiatives. Aurobindo Pharma Foundation, India as a Section 8 Company was formed in July 2020 as a wholly owned company, and is philanthropic arm of the company.

Pharma MNCs which operate in India include Abbott India, GlaxoSmithKline, Pfizer and AstraZeneca maceutical companies. These companies are also actively engaging NGOs and SHGs. During FY24, Abbott India spent at Rs 24.37 Crores on various CSR programs. The company contributed to Self Employed Women's Association (SEWA) for quality and affordable healthcare delivery program. It also promoted STEM education and healthy living among children with Smile Foundation.

To summarise, it can be said that pharmaceutical companies are pursuing their CSR activities through their own foundation which is in the form of a Trust or a Foundation registered as a Section 8 Company set up as non-profit organization. Alternatively, these pharma companies rope in those NGOs, or SHGs which CSR and ESG Committee have active involvement in specific pharmaceutical com-

> Dr. Anil Kumar Angrish-Associate Professor (Finance and Accounting). Department of Pharmaceutical Management, NIPER S.A.S. Nagar (Mohali), **DISCLAIMER**: Views are personal and do not represent

the views of the Institute.

**ANGRISH** 

## ased on Sturnover, net worth or profit criteria, pharmaceu-

tical companies comply with the requirements of Section 135 of the Companies Act along with the Companies (Corporate Social Responsibility) Rules, 2014, and spend a certain amount of profits on CSR activities. CSR Committee or CSR & ESG Committee of respective companies is entrusted with the mandate to achieve the objectives. The CSR Policy and programs focus on the areas covered under Schedule VII of the Companies Act, 2013 and the CSR Committee on the behalf of a given company strives to create maximum impact by leveraging a company's financial and human resources, networks and ex- NGOs, foundations, trusts, or pertise. Pharmaceutical companies are actively performing government-backed initia-CSR activities on their own or these companies engage Self-help Groups (SHGs), Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs), and their own Foundations to carry out their CSR Policy.

Most of these top pharmaceutical companies have created their own foundations/ trusts/Section 8 companies to implement CSR Policy. For example, Sun Pharma has Founand Control of India (FDEC), Divi's Labs has Divi's Founof these organizations have nary Disease (COPD) patients Independent Assessment by

Name of the Company | SHGs, NGOs and Foundations Engaged

Foundation for Disease Elimination and Control of India (FDEC), Shantilal Shanghvi Foundation, Sun Pharma Science Foundation and Foundation for Pharmaceutical Academy for Global Excellence
Divi's Foundation for Gifted Children
Cipla Foundation, COPD Foundation, Score Foundation, Learning Links Foundation, Agastya International Foundation, Women India Trust, Educate Girls, HelpAge India, and Tata Memorial Centre
The UNM Foundation
J. C. Juneja Foundation, Tata Memorial Cancer Hospital, Radhaka Autism Welfare Society, Oscar for Life Charitable Trust, Give Foundation for acid attack survivors, SAATHI for HIV positive pregnant women, Vidhya Wati Sewa Trust for Education and Health, Impact guru Foundation, M3M Foundation, and Annamrita Foundation
Dr. Reddy's Foundation, NICE Foundation, Naandi Foundation, Roshni Trust
The Lupin Human Welfare and Research Foundation (LHWRF) and Lupin Foundation
Zydus Foundation, Red Cross Society, Zydus Medical College and Hospital
Aurobindo Pharma Foundation, India and Hare Krishna Movement Charitable Foundation
SEWA and Smile Foundation

Source: Compiled from Annual Reports of respective Pharmaceutical Companies

Science Foundation belongs to Sun Pharma.

In addition to their own foundations/trusts, these pharmaceutical companies also collaborate with many societies besides supporting tives. For example, Dr. Reddy's Laboratories has Dr. Reddy's Foundation as Implementing Agency for multiple CSR projects in the areas of Livelihood and Environment. At the same time, NICE Foundation is the Implementing Agency for Health-related projects - Community Health Inter-

vention Programme (CHIP). CSR activities are being carried out by these pharma dation for Disease Elimination companies in those countries too where these companies have operations. For example, dation for Gifted Children, Lupin Limited partnered with Cipla has Cipla Foundation, Mark Cuban Cost Plus Drug the Torrent Group has the Company and the COPD UNM Foundation, Mankind Foundation to improve access Pharma has J. C. Juneja Founto affordable medications for dation, to name a few. Some Chronic Obstructive Pulmo-doctors, and nursing staff.

too to lay emphasis on specific pharma MNCs having operaing trust in activities pursued. and Control of India (FDEC), areas, e.g., Shantilal Shanghvi tions in India are carrying Foundation and Sun Pharma out CSR initiatives in India too when their turnover, net worth or profits exceed the prescribed limit.

Just like other Companies, pharmaceutical companies too get Impact Assessment of the CSR Projects done from Independent Agencies, e.g., Soulace, an independent agency carried out Impact Assessment for Zydus Foundation. The Company shared the brief details on the findings of Impact Assessment. Findings indicated that the services provided by Zydus Foundation were comparable to those of top corporate hospitals, and there was no compromise on quality despite being offered free of charge. It was also reported that findings were based on interviews of patients, and Impact Assessment study had revealed a high level of satisfaction amongst patients regarding

various aspects such as hos-

pital ambience, affordability

and accessibility of services,

differ in their approach to CSR in terms of 'what aspects', as well as 'how aspects'. Provisions have been laid down in the Companies Act regarding CSR activities but pharmaceutical companies focus on specific areas of their interest too through their own foundation. 'How aspect' is also important,

i.e., to understand whether

these pharmaceutical compa-

nies are deploying resources

through their related entity or

through outside bodies such as NGOs, or SHGs. During FY24, Sun Pharma spent Rs 46.03 Crores on CSR activities including amount spent in administrative overheads, and amount spent on Impact Assessment. Business Responsibility and Sustainability Report (BRSR) cited that the company is engaging with NGOs to facilitate the streamlining of the CSR activities which are undertaken in partnership. Main areas of interest for NGO include employee volunteering, and

agile management process.

Sun Pharma formed Founda-

Pharmaceutical companies a wholly owned subsidiary on September 21, 2016, as a Section 8 Company. This subsidiary is dedicated to CSR initiative of the company. Divi's Labs had a CSR com-

mitment of Rs 57.97 Crores and benefited about 12,28,000 beneficiaries during FY2024. Divi's Foundation for Gifted Children is the trust in which contribution for CSR project implementation is made by the company. In Cipla Limited, their em-

ployees regularly volunteer or participate in crowdfunding campaigns. Over 100,000 hours of volunteering was reported for FY24. Cipla Foundation is the philanthropic arm of Cipla Limited and all CSR activities within the company are undertaken directly by the company or NGOs, SHGs, Foundations through its Foundation. It is the Cipla Foundation that identifies CSR projects as per the CSR Policy of the company and proposes to the CSR of District - Sirmour through Committee. Implementation partner AT India for sustainand monitoring of the projects is also entrusted to the communities, prevention and foundation. The Foundation empowerment of Leprosy and (ZMCH), about 4.50 Lakh

in many initiatives across the and social donations for FY24

35.90 Crore in FY24 as CSR Expenditure due to which more than 1,60,000 lives were positively impacted. Range of CSR activities can be observed from diverse or organizations supported through CSR initiatives of the company. A Holistic Development Approach in 10 villages able and resilient mountain created multiple foundations in the U.S. In the same way, a third party helps in enhanction for Disease Elimination collaborates with various in- Lymphatic Filariasis Patients persons benefited from CSR

# Indian Stock Market Ends Flat, Smallcap Stocks Extend Rally

market saw a volatile trading session on Friday, with benchmark indices managing to stay in the positive territory.

Gains in metal stocks provided support, while smallcap stocks continued their strong rally. This was followed by two consecutive day bull run, when the share market closed in green. The Sensex ended at 74,332.58, down by just 7.51 points or 0.01 per cent. During the intra-day session, the 30-share index moved between a high of 74,586.43 and a low of 74,038.03.

The Nifty, however, managed to end slightly higher, gaining 7.80 points or 0.03 per cent to close at 22,552.50. The index touched a high of 22,633.80 during the day but also slipped to an intra-day low of 22,464.75.

The indices opened weak but recovered as buying interest



stocks, including Tata Motors. near fair valuations, while mid

Oil and gas stocks also contributed to the recovery. Broader markets outperformed, with said Krishna Appala from Capithe smallcap index rising by 1.1 per cent, marking its fourth consecutive session of gains.

"Today's market strength was driven by a broad-based recovadded.

emerged in select blue-chip ery, with Nifty 50 stabilising and small-caps saw continued buying after recent corrections,

> Sustaining this rally depends on earnings recovery and broader market sentiment, the expert

Among the top gainers in the Nifty pack were Tata Motors, Bharat Electronics, Nestle India, and Bajaj Auto.

However, some IT and banking stocks faced mild selling pressure which includes IndusInd Bank, Shriram Finance, NTPC, BPCL and Infosys.

In the broader market, the Nifty Smallcap100 index continued its upward trend, closing 0.67 per cent higher. However, the Nifty Midcap100 index slipped by 0.32 per cent. Sectoral performance on the

PSU Bank, Metal, Media, and Oil & Gas indices saw gains of up to 1.83 per cent, while other sectors remained subdued. Over the past week, the Nifty gained 2.1 per cent, while the

NSE was mixed. Nifty Auto,

Nifty Midcap 100 and Nifty Smallcap 250 surged 2.9 per cent and 5.8 per cent, respeccrore each. The first auction

## **RBI's Move to Inject Rs 1.9 Lakh Crore Liquidity Seen as Positive for Banks**

MUMBAI: The RBI's move to inject Rs 1.9 lakh crore has come as a big positive for banks, which is reflected in the rise in the stock prices of both private and public sector banks, as well as Non-Banking Financial Companies (NBFCs) on Thursday.

The Nifty PSU Bank index rose 1.46 per cent, or 86.3 points to hit an intraday high of 5,976.75, while the Nifty Bank index increased 0.72 per cent, adding 349.15 points to hit an intraday high of 48,839.10. Similarly, the Nifty Private Bank index recorded a gain of up to 0.67 per cent in morning trade.

As part of the measures to infuse more liquidity in the banking system, the RBI has announced that it will conduct open market operation (OMO) purchases of government securities worth Rs 1 lakh crore in two tranches of Rs 50,000



the second by March 18.

Besides, the central bank has also decided to hold a dollarrupee buy/sell swap auction of \$10 billion for 36 months to be held on March 24.

The measures are expected to infuse additional liquidity of Rs 1.9 lakh crore. The move comes ahead of an anticipation of tight liquidity conditions by the end the current financial year (FY25) amid tax outflows and banks rushing to meet targets.

The RBI said it "will continue to monitor evolving liquid-

conditions and take measures as appropriate to ensure orderly liquidity conditions," it said in a press release.

These measures will not only address frictional

liquidity tightness in March but also the issue of durable liquidity which has tightened of late, according to Teresa John, economist at Nirmal Bang In-

"While liquidity will likely be neutral by end March, it may move to surplus as we enter into FY26 unless we continue to see dollar sales by the RBI," John said.

stitutional Equities.

Transmission is also likely to improve significantly, she said, adding that corporate bond spreads had tightened despite rate cuts.

#### SIDBI signs MoU with Federal Bank Limited to Strengthen MSME financing



New Delhi

Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI) and The Federal Bank Limited (FBL) signed MoU for financing MSMEs for growth and development of MSME Ecosystem. The arrangement is for providing financial assistance in the field of project finance, machinery/equipment finance, working capital (including letter of credit and bank guarantee), loan against property, etc. Further, joint financing shall also be explored while extending credit facilities to MSMEs. The MoU was signed by Prakash Kumar, Deputy Managing Director, SIDBI and Harsh Dugar, Executive Director, FBL in the presence of senior SIDBI and

## **Credit Card spending hits** 1,841 Billion in January 2025 despite Market

Slowdown: Report **FW DESK** Mumbai

Asit C. Mehta Investment Intermediates Limited (ACMIIL) has released its latest insights into the credit card market for January 2025, revealing key trends in credit card spending, transaction volume, spending patterns, and market share dynamics among leading banks. Market Overview:Total credit card spending for the month reached Rs 1,841 billion, marking a 2% MoM decline but a strong 14% YoY growth. The spending contraction on a Mo-M basis was primarily due to seasonality effects, as December spending was boosted by festive and year-end expenditures.

# **EPFO 3.0:** How Can You Withdraw PF Amount from ATMs Soon

ees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) is set to introduce a new system called 'EPFO 3.0'. which will allow subscribers to withdraw their provident fund (PF) directly from ATMs. Union Labour Minister Man-

sukh Mandaviya announced this update at an event in Hyderabad, saying that the new system will offer banking-like convenience along with several digital features to make transactions easier.

"In the coming days, the EPFO 3.0 version will come. This means the EPFO will become equivalent to a bank. Like transactions are carried out in a members will no longer have to bank, you (EPFO subscribers) have your Universal Account Number (UAN), and you will



be able to do all your work," Mandaviya said.

EPFO 3.0 is an improved version of the current system, designed to make the withdrawal process faster and more user-friendly.

With this upgrade, EPFO visit government offices or get approvals from their employers to access their PF money.



able to manage their accounts using their Universal Account Number (UAN).

It is not clear yet what limit will be set for PF withdrawals from ATMs. Currently, withdrawing PF

scribers will be

money involves paperwork and takes a long time to process. EPFO 3.0 aims to change this by making fund withdrawals. claim settlements, and pension transfers much simpler

The EPFO has been making several reforms to improve user experience. Complaints about EPFO services have decreased, and new features like faster claim processing, name correction options, and pension withdrawals from any bank have already been introduced.

The government plans to launch the EPFO 3.0 app by May or June this year. This app will allow users to check their PF balance, track transactions, and make withdrawals

The minister emphasised that since the money in these accounts belongs to the employees, they should have the freedom to access it anytime and anywhere without unnecessary delays.

## India likely to clock steady GDP growth of 6.5 pc in 2025-26 NEW DELHI: India's GDP

growth is expected to be steady at 6.5 per cent in fiscal 2025-2026 with the upcoming monsoon season likely to be normal and commodity prices to remain soft.

Private consumption is expected to recover further, while investment growth hinges on private Capex, according to a Crisil report released on Monday. Private consumption is expected improve further, on expectations of healthy agricultural production and cooling food inflation. Softer food inflation should create space in household budgets for discretionary spending, the report states.

Second, the tax benefits announced in the Union Budget 2025-2026 and increased allocations towards key asset and employment-generating schemes are expected to support consumption. Third, easing monetary policy by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) is expected to support discretionary consumption, the report further states. The Crisil report also expects the RBI's Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) to cut the repo rate by 50-75 bps in fiscal 2026.

regulations for non-



are expected to transmit the benefits from an easier monetary policy to the broader economy, it added. The report points out that investment growth hinges on a sustained pick-up in private corporate investment, as the government normalises Capex to meet its fiscal deficit target for the next year. It further states that risks to the growth outlook are tilted to the downside, given the elevated uncertainty because of the US-led tariff war.

With domestic private consumption expected to hold up, imports are expected to remain healthy in fiscal 2026, while exports growth could be subdued because of potential reciprocal tariffs imposed by the US. The escalating global trade uncertainty could also lead to increased imports from China as a result of trade redirection, the report added.

Citing the official figures, the Crisil report mentions The central bank's recent that GDP growth for 2024-25 slower than 9 banking financial companies the previous fiscal.

#### PhonePe launches 'insuring HEROES' campaign for Int'l Women's Day



**NEW DELHI:** PhonePe on Thursday launched its 'insuring HEROES' campaign ahead of the International Women's Day. International Women's Day is observed every year on March 8. As part of the initiative, the company is offering exclusive discounts of up to 30 per cent. specifically for women, on select term life and health insurance plans. It is available on the PhonePe platform until March 9. 2025. Women can avail these exclusive offers on the Phone-Pe app to ensure their overall economic well-being and enjoy long-term stability. Discounts include up to 15 per cent off on health insurance plans, and up to 30 per cent off on term life insurance plans. Through this initiative, PhonePe aims to assist women with greater financial liquidity-easing measures and is estimated at 6.5 per cent, security, facilitating their access

ht insurance solutions

tailored to their unique needs.

## Vishwas Bill 2.0 to decriminalise over 100 provisions, will simplify process for business: FM Sitharaman

**NEW DELHI:** Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said on Wednesday that the government is committed to encouraging global economic partnerships, leveraging technology to strengthen traditional sectors and to significantly enhance the export potential of India.

Addressing a post-budget webinar on the theme 'Regulatory. Investment, And Ease Of Doing Business (EODB) Re- for the year 2025-26.

forms', she said the government will now bring up the general Vishwas Bill 2.0 to decriminalise more than 100 provisions in various laws. It will further simplify processes for businesses, the minister said.

The Finance Minister emphasised that the government remains committed to ensuring the timely implementation on capex, Nirmala Sitharall budget announcements



Highlighting the focus laid reforms is complemented by development is already creat- implemented.

focus on capital expenditure as a driver of economic growth. For the year 2025-26, total effective capex is proposed at 15.48 lakh crores, which is 4.3 per cent of the GDP, with 11.21 lakh crore allocated as core capital expenditure by the Centre, which is 3.1 per cent of Rs10 lakh to Rs 20 lakh and the GDP. This unprecedented the new MSME Credit assessastructure

the government's unwavering ing jobs, strengthening industries and laying the foundation for private sector participation in India's growth story.

The Finance Minister also highlighted that budget announcements for 2024-25 such as the hike in the limit under MUDRA loans from ment model have already been

## Federal Bank Welcomes Vidya Balan as it's First-Ever Brand Ambassador

\*This association marks a significant milestone in the Bank's brand evolution journey \*A balanced approach by the Bank to cut across

geographies, genders and generations. **TANVIR KAUR** 

Mumbai Federal Bank, one of India's leading private sector banks with an impressive legacy over

the years, today announced the appointment of acclaimed actress Vidya Balan as its firstever brand ambassador. The announcement was made during a special ceremony in Mumbai, where Ms. Balan was presented with a commemorative memento by K.V.S. Manian, Managing Director & CEO of Federal Bank.

This association is an important milestone in the brand's journey as it continues to enhance its market position. The Bank's senior team in a recent analyst meet had laid out clear directional path for the Bank and brand transformation was one of the significant themes.

M V S Murthy, Chief Marketing Officer of the Bank said Ms. Balan was a very strategic choice to capture the attention across geographies, genders and generations. He said, "We are super-stoked to have Ms. Vidya Balan champion Federal Bank. She is versatile, appeals across demographics and gender, has a pan-India fan following, and is multi-faceted. An actor's actor, she becomes the character on camera while continuing to charm us in her interpersonal interactions offscreen. Her preparation, de-



sire to understand nuances, and consideration of various scenarios all contribute to her ability to bring out the essence of every role she plays. We have experienced this as we sought to bring her on board. At Federal Bank, too, empathy is our segue to understanding and servicing our customers. It's a universal trait that transcends geographies, generations, and customer demographics. Our NPS scores and Peer Comparison in the Nielsen studies, clearly indicate the stripes we have earned by being a Human at The Core, Digital at The ForeTM Franchise. Much like Vidya, we too make light of our chores and celebrate the wins created through the collective effort of our teams. I am sure Vidya will power prosperity for everyone associated with Federal Bank. Character, Culture and Customers are how we celebrate ourselves and the Brand.'

Vidya Balan, who has earned critical acclaim and a devoted following through her versatile performances in films like 'Kahaani', 'Parineeta',

and 'Shakuntala Devi', etc. expressed her enthusiasm about the partnership. "Being an ambassador for varied Brands in the country, I believe we are telling the India Story to the World. And Federal Bank, makes the cut, in terms of powering our economy from down South to up North. They have a very broad brush when it comes to having a generationally loyal franchise, being the leading employer for Women in the country, creating a work culture where people stay and contribute to all round growth. I am deeply appreciative of their efforts in supporting communities and causes, while continuing to build a very robust business. I genuinely sense the vibe when Federal Bankers tell me that they are Human at the Core, Digital to the Fore TM. Looking forward to a very exciting 'Rishta' with Federal Bank.' The multi-year association

of Federal Bank will span across various marketing initiatives, including television commercials and digital campaigns.

# Stock Market-No need of panic, recover soon

fter the of both

Sensex and Nifty on 28th Febsmall investors, because ing continuously for a few days after 1996 i.e. after 29 spree is continuing.

Exchange (BSE) index Sensex eye on the movement of the and 50 companies are listed in NSE or Nifty. In the stock that one should not try to make market, Indian, foreign insti- investment in the stock market tutional investors, individual foreign investors etc. invest in listed companies. Both the indices are very sensitive. When the shares of a particu- amount in the Indian stock lar company among the listed companies are continuously sold, then the investors' trust in that company decreases second and third place. On Feband the price of the shares of ruary 28, foreign institutional that company decreases, due investors sold shares worth Rs to which the investors have to 11,639 crore, while this year forsuffer losses. For example, if someone has bought 1 share sold shares worth more than of X company for Rs 100 and Rs 1 lakh crore. On the other when the price of that share hand, domestic investors sold falls to Rs 80, then the said shares worth about Rs 8 lakh 88 investor suffers a loss of Rs 20. thousand crore on February 28,

for the fluctuations in the are, the announcement by US price of shares. For example, President Mr. Donald Trump poor financial performance to impose 25 percent tariff on of the company or the com- Canada and Mexico and 10 pany getting involved in some percent additional tax on Chibility, government policies, to a global trade war, weak-

weakening of rupee against the dollar, global uncertainty, fear of trade war, geopolitical crisis, policies adopted by the US central bank Federal Reserve, etc. SEBI is the regulator of

the stock market, but despite ruary, there is panic among the presence of SEBI, some cases of artificially bringing Sensex has been declining down the price and then raisfor the last 5 months, and ing it have been seen. This is Nifty has also been declindone to benefit a few special people, in which the biggest loss is suffered by small invesyears. This has created a fear tors. Harshad Mehta scandal in the minds of investors that can be mentioned in this case. their money is not safe in the There is a need to be alert and stock market and the selling understand the market to detect the disturbances in the A total of 30 companies are market. Potential losses can be listed in the Bombay Stock avoided by keeping a constant stock market. It is important a means of livelihood and avoid excessive greed.

Foreign institutional investors have invested a large market, in which the US is in the first place, while Luxembourg and Canada are in the eign institutional investors have There are many reasons the 6 biggest reasons for which



Kong, China and Japan, the current stance of the Federal Reserve Bank of US, decline in quarterly profits of some listed companies due to decrease in economic activities, the persistence of geopolitical crisis, the rupee being continuously weak against the dollar, etc. Apart from these, overvaluation of shares and psychological reasons are also important factors for the stock market crash. There is a tradition in India to follow the crowd. After seeing some people selling, others also started imitating them. It seems selling was recorded in shares of all sectors like IT, telecom, health, banking, FMCG etc. Therefore, there does not seem to be any scope for tampering with the market.

(GDP) has increased to 6.2 percent in the third quarter of FY 2024-25 from 5.6 percent (revised estimate) in the second quarter. In addition, the GDP growth rate forecast for FY 2024-25 has been raised from 6.4 percent to 6.5 percent. tal. Therefore, they are forced controversy, political instances goods, which may lead These figures show that the

Due to reduction in prices of food items, the retail inflation rate based on Consumer Price Index (CPI) came down to 4.31 percent in January, which is the lowest in the last 5 months. It was at 5.22 percent in December, while it was at 5.1 percent in January 2024. Earlier in the month of November, the inflation rate was at 5.48 percent.

To boost economic activities, the Reserve Bank of India reduced the repo rate by 0.25 percent in the monetary policy review conducted on February 7, bringing it down from 6.50 percent to 6.25 percent. It is worth noting that the repo so because on February 28, rate has been reduced after about 5 years. The central bank was avoiding reducing the repo rate till now mainly due to inflation.

14 percent and 16 percent Gross Domestic Product in the last two years, overall credit growth has been slowing down for the last few months and in December 2024 it has come down to 11.2 percent. A major reason for this is the high lending rate. Right now, banks do not have cheap capito lend at expensive rates and pace of growth is accelerating. due to the availability of loans

at expensive rates, common people and businessmen are avoiding taking loans. Because of this, companies are short of capital, due to which they are not able to produce at full capacity.

By cutting the repo rate by 0.25 percent by the Reserve Bank of India, banks will get capital at a cheaper rate and they will be able to lend at a cheaper rate and when loans are available at a cheaper rate, both common people and businessmen will take loans, which will accelerate both investment and savings and consumption will increase as well as economic activities will also increase.

In the budget, the govern-

ment has clearly stated that its

aim is to accelerate development. With the GDP growth rate being 6.2 percent in the December quarter, the hope of accelerating the pace of development has increased. Also, to further increase the growth rate, the Reserve Bank of India has cut the repo rate. Due to the reduction in inflation in the month of January, the way has been cleared for cutting the repo rate in the upcoming monetary reviews, which will boost the pace of development of the country and when the economy be-After loan growth between comes strong, there will be less scope for selling in the stock market and it will be possible for investors to get attractive returns on their investments. Therefore, there is no need for investors to panic, instead they need to avoid unnecessary selling.

> $Satish\ Singh, Ahmedabad$ Based Senior Columnist, views are personal.

# India charging 70 pc auto tariffs; Denmark rejects Trump's renewed Is Trump's 100 pc claim wrong? Push for Greenland to join US

down on his threats to impose reciprocal tariffs, President Donald Trump accused India of charging tariffs higher than 100 per cent on autos, even though India has slashed the highest rate to 70 per cent.

"India charges auto tariffs higher than 100 per cent, "he said in his address to a joint session of Congress on Tuesday, outlining his policies.

However, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman announced in her budget last month that the tariffs on luxury cars were being cut to 70 per cent from 125 per cent. She also cut tariffs on high-

end motorcycles from 50 per cent to 40 per cent. Commerce Minister Piyush

Goyal is to visit Washington to discuss tariffs with US officials. "Countless other nations

Trudeau not willing to

lift Canada's retaliatory

any US tariffs on Canada, a senior government official told The

Associated Press on Wednes-

was not authorised to speak

publicly on the matter. The of-

ficial said Trump and Trudeau

spoke by phone around midday.

Other Canadian officials pub-

licly echoed Trudeau's position.

"We're not interested in meeting

in the middle and having some

reduced tariff. Canada wants

the tariffs removed," Canadian

Finance Minister Dominic LeBlanc told the Canadian Broad-

Ontario Premier Doug Ford,

the leader of Canada's most

populous province, agreed

casting Corporation.

day. The offi-

cial confirmed

stance on the

condition of

anonymity be-

cause the person

charge us tremendously higher tariffs than we charge them, "Trump said, justifying his programme of raising The reciprocal tariffs would

come into effect on April 2.

"Whatever they tariff us, " he

on imports from Canada and Mexico, and an additional 10 per cent came into effect. Trump admitted that tariffs

would cause "a little disturbance" and "there could be an adjustment period" but asserted that it would make the US richer.

when his 25 per cent tariffs

That was meant to inoculate himself against criticism of the effects of the tariffs.

The stock markets have been down by more than three per cent in the last two days and retailers have warned of impending increase in prices of

Tariffs by India on imports from the US have been one of Trump's favourite talking points. In the past, he has mentioned the Indian tariffs on Harley-Davidson motorcycles and whiskey.

will never be part of the US.

"It is not, and it will never be,

the case that the United States

can dictate and get a part of

the Danish Kingdom, "he said.

Greenland, the world's largest is-

land with a population of around

until 1953, when it became an

**OSLO**: Denmark has strongly opposed US President Donald Trump's renewed push for Greenland to join the US, following his remarks during a joint session of Congress two days ago.

Trump declared on Wednesday that his administration would "strongly support" Greenlanders' "right to determine" their future, adding: "And if you choose, we welcome you into the United States of America.'

Acknowledging the uncertainty sparked by Trump's statements, Danish Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen reaffirmed Denmark's position on Wednesday, emphasising that Greenland's future is solely for its people to decide.

"Greenland belongs to the Greenlanders. This is a position that we very strongly support from the Danish government, she said.

Greenlandic Prime Minister

ing greater self-governance while Denmark retained au-

Mute Egede firmly rejected Trump's claim, saying on social media that Greenlanders have no desire to become part of the US. Danish Defence Minister Troels Lund Poulsen echoed these sentiments, stressing that Greenland Americans.

in reaction to Trump, who on Tuesday reiterated his desire to make Greenland, currently a semi-autonomous territory of the kingdom of Denmark, part of the United States. "We do not want 60, 000, was a Danish colony to be Americans, nor Danes, we are Kalaallit (Greenlanders). The integral part of Denmark with Americans and their leader must Greenlanders given Danish understand that, "Egede said in a post on Facebook.

of Pakistanis, Impose **Complete Travel Ban Soon** 



**US Likely to Bar Entry** 

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan. along with Afghanistan, is likely to feature on top of the list of countries that are expected to face new travel restrictions including a complete ban on citizens of these countries from entering the United States - in the new travel ban plan being prepared by the Donald Trump

Sources in the Pakistani establishment told IANS on Thursday that the vetting and scrutiny process for both countries may reveal multiple deficiencies which may lead to a complete travel ban, putting at risk innumerable Pakistanis and Afghans who wish to seek refuge or relocation in the US through immigration.

"Afghanistan will be included in the list of recommended countries for a complete travel ban. Pakistan's name would also be recommended for inclusion in the list," said one reliable source who revealed that the new travel restrictions could be implemented within the next 10 days.

Urging those Pakistanis who have valid US visas to travel as soon as possible before the travel ban gets announced, the source, who spoke on the condition of anonymity, said that Washington's fresh move could have a direct impact on tens of thousands of Afghans who were previously cleared for resettlement in the US after being granted Special Immigrant Visas.

The resettlement of these Afghans is a compensation and commitment made to them during the Biden administration for working with the US during the 20-year war in Afghanistan,'

At least 20,000 Afghans havng the Special Immigrant Visa to US are stranded in Pakistan and face deportation to Afghanistan after US President Donald Trump announced a 90-day freeze on refugee admissions and foreign aid that funds their flights on January 20.

called for implementing new rules of intensive scrutiny and

thority over its foreign and defence policy. This is not the first time Trump talked about taking over Greenland. Denmark has rejected the idea, saying the island is not

up for sale. Greenland's Prime Minister Egede said on Wednesday that the Greenlandic people will determine their own future and do not want to be Danes nor

Egede made his comments

# administration.

he said.

At least 200,000 Afghans are awaiting their resettlement in the US after the Afghan Taliban came to power in August 2021.

threats.

#### citizenship. In 1979, Greenland His speech came the day **British PM announces new 1.6-billion** Spreading eastern Congo violence threatens civilians, aid workers: UN pound deal for Ukraine to buy missiles

UNITED NATIONS: Intariffs if Trump leaves creased violence in the three easternmost provinces of the some tariffs on Canada Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) is raising deep **OTTAWA**: Canadian Prime concern for civilians, including Minister Justin Trudeau is unaid workers, a UN humanitarian official said. willing to lift Canada's retaliatory tariffs on the United States if Bruno Lemarquis, the UN President Donald Trump leaves

resident humanitarian coordinator for the DRC, voiced alarm over the recent increase in targeted violence against civilians, including relief workers, and civilian infrastructure in Ituri, North Kivu and South Kivu provinces. Lemarquis said in a state-

ment that the attacks, including the abduction of dozens patients from two hospitals, are serious violations of international humanitarian and human rights laws. They threaten operations providing relief to millions of civilians.

In Ituri province, local authorities report that more than 16,000 people fled clashes in the territory of Djugu since Thursday. The area has seen an escalation in clashes and attacks by armed groups, resulting in civilian casualties and displacement.

Stephane Dujarric, spokes- since January.'



man for UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, said the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UN-HCR) issued a new report on displaced people returning to the eastern DRC

declared, "we will tariff them."

"China's average tariff on

our products is twice what

we charge them, and South

Korea's average tariff is four

times higher, "he said, also

mentioning Brazil.

"They say that Congolese nationals fleeing the conflict, as well as those outside the country who originate from the area affected by the conflict, may need refugee protection under international and regional legal frameworks, " Dujarric said. "Close to 80, 000 men, women and children have fled to neighbouring countries, including around 61, 000 who arrived in Burundi

UNHCR said that around the North Kivu capital of Goma, about 17, 000 people remain in displacement sites. schools and churches, while 414, 000 people have been on the move for the past four weeks, encouraged by the de facto authorities to return to

their villages of origin. The agency said that at least 209, 000 people from the sites arrived spontaneously in Masisi, Nyiragongo, and Rutshuru territories, where basic services are not equipped for the sudden surge of people. Given the widespread insecurity in the provinces and surrounding areas, many more may need to cross borders to find protection

and assistance, Xinhua news agency reported.

UNHCR called on neighbouring countries to register all asylum-seekers from the DRC and provide them with documentation.

The spokesman said UN peacekeepers reported the situation around Goma remains highly unstable. The M23 rebels, who invaded Goma over a month ago, continue consolidating its city control with checkpoints and patrols.

"This, our colleagues say, continues to restrict the peacekeepers' freedom of movement and access to the airport in Goma, "Dujarric said.

The spokesman said that in Ituri, a patrol was deployed to Pimbo in the Djugu territory following an attack by members of the CODECO armed group in the area.

 $\tilde{\text{He}}$  also said the UN mission in the DRC, known as MO-NUSCO, sent a peacekeeping patrol to Matate, northeast of the provincial capital of Bunia, in response to an attack by suspected members of the Zaire militia, which resulted in two civilians killed and one

#### to use 1.6 billion pounds (\$2 billion) of British export finance to purchase more than 5,000 air defence missiles "This will be vital for protecting critical infrastructure

**LONDON**: British Prime Min-

ister Keir Starmer announced

that Britain will allow Ukraine

and strengthening Ukraine, " Starmer told a press conference on Sunday following a summit with Western leaders in London, Xinhua news agency reported. The goal is "to put Ukraine in the strongest position" so the country can negotiate from a position of strength, Over 80 per cent of Japanese people favour capital punishment

Western leaders, including more than a dozen European heads of state and Canadian earlier survey conducted in 2019. feelings of victims of capital crimes Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, gathered in London on Sunday for a defense summit aimed at advancing a peace plan for Ukraine. Starmer said leaders at the summit had agreed on peace in Ukraine: to maintain

to ensure that any lasting peace guarantees Ukraine's sovereignty and security, with Ukraine at the table for any negotiations; to deter "any future invasion by Russia" in the event of a peace deal; and to establish a "coalition of the willing" to defend Ukraine and uphold peace in the country. The leaders also agreed to

military aid to Ukraine while the

conflict continues and increase

economic pressure on Russia;

meet again soon to sustain the momentum behind these efforts, Starmer said. The prime minister reaffirmed Britain's commitment to supporting the peace plan with "boots on the ground, and planes in the air." "Europe must do the heavy

lifting, "he said, emphasising backing.

"Let me be clear, we agree

#### with Trump on the urgent need vetting of foreigners seeking for a durable peace. Now we entry in the United States and a four-step plan to guarantee need to deliver together, "he detecting national security

#### reports the leading news portal, Kyodo News. In the most recent

cent of Japanese people support the death penalty, stating that the existence of the system is "unavoidable, "local media reported on Sunday. This survey is conducted every five years, and for the fifth

**TOKYO**: According to a govern- consecutive term, the support for per cent in a government poll, survey, it was shown that the approval for capital punishment increased by 2.3 points, reaching 83.1 per cent in comparison to the



of individuals supporting abolition saw a more significant increase of 7.5 points, climbing to 16.5 per cent. The main reason for the support of the death penalty given by 66.2 per cent was concern for the

total of 55.5 per cent said violent crimes should be paid for with lives, while 53.4 per cent, raising concern, stated that the abolition of capital punishment would lead to a rise in atrocious crimes.

## **INDIA IS WORRIED US-Ukraine May Sign Agreement for Minerals**



HINDALCO and Vedanta, investing to the tune of the USD two billions in the processing of aluminium are naturally to

It is going to adversely affect the Indian producers, if the US, Ukraine and Rus- live telecast of the heated sia set up joint ventures in exchanges between Trump Ukraine for manufacturing and Zelanskyy had caused aluminium in Ukraine. At worldwide concerns, however, present countries like Canada, China, India and Russia ex- summit of two chief executives port aluminium to the US. It of the US and Ukraine, but it, is estimated that the Trump Administration has already decided to invest about 150 billion USD in the mining

finally sign the mineral agree-

sector of Ukraine. much-awaited thaw was inald Trump, indicated before Ukrainian President Vladimir Zelanskyy, if he is ready to sign a multidimensional peace and investments in his part of world diplomacy. country for minerals.

cent investments estimated made productive and also for but later it was noticed that

stabilising the political systems in Ukraine. It appeared Trump's agenda for peace sufaluminium fered when Zelanskyy refused producers, to sign the American draft for peace and investments. In spite of the heated ex-

changes recently witnessed

between Trump and Zelan-

skyv at the White House, the

be worried, if the US-Ukraine two leaders, who appear to be renegotiating for peace soon. They are expected to meet again on Friday, 7 March. The initial reaction to the within a few hours it was not a

perhaps, was comic interlude.

giving a new dimension to the

world of diplomacy. For the foreign affairs scholars in New Delhi, it could The possibility of this be a new experiment in the sensitive field of diplomacy. If dicated on Saturday, 1 March, the Chinese President Xi Jinwhen the US President, Don- ping has been advocating an aggressive form of diplomacy the American media that known as the woolfish aphe was ready to welcome proach in dealing with other countries, Trump and Zelanskyy would be remembered for making comical scenes agreement with the US for during their summit to be a

Initially, the world capitals Trump is keen that the refrom Europe to Asia, perhaps, were stunned for a while that to be USD 500 billion com- the much-awaited peace in mitted to Ukraine must be Europe might remain elusive,



as a comedian before leading his country. Similarly, Trump has done a few successful television shows before becoming the president.

Asked why the Indian media suddenly became critical of the Ukrainian leader, a senior diplomat confided to the Financial World that for most readers and television viewers, the Indian media is just an extension of the entertainment channels. They seldom offer any serious content, but are seen weaving narratives for camouflaging the poor performance of the government of the day. Therefore, their overdrive in criticising Zelanskyy could be an extension of the non-performance

of India's Jaishankar, who is also the political face of the contemporary regime of Prime Minister Narendra Modi as its foreign minister. It, however, is not surprising that the Indian channels are abuzz



with anchors and analysts resembling parrots painted in attractive colours are being seen portraying the eclipse of Indian foreign policy from her neighbourhood to Washington as a milestone of great successes of the Indian regime. Jaishankar's cowardice was palpable when he gave a subdued statement before the Rajya Sabha that the handcuffing and enchaining of the Indian citizens accused of entering the US was a part of the standard operating system of the US Homeland security. Apart from embarrassing his fellow citizens in India, the Indian foreign minister cannot deny that during his tenure the country's influence has substantially declined from present top diplomat, S. Maldives to Bangladesh.

Indian Interests

During the past 10 years, the Modi regime has made India's capital industries such as steel and aluminium suffer due to the lack of government

support. With the Indian foreign minister behaving like an under secretary of the US State Department, there is disquiet in the industrial sector, whether he would ever care to protect Indian interests and dignity.

With India losing her markets in the West, a bleak future awaits India's steel and aluminium industries. They are being sandwiched between the Chinese threats of dumping its products in India and the changing scenario in the world industries, especially with the US entry in the mineral-rich Eastern Europe and Russia.

It is estimated that the US would soon be accessing and processing 22 minerals, including ferroalloys, nonferro alloys and rare earth metals, such graphites, key components in electrical car batteries and nuclear reactors.

In the case of bauxite, China, which produces 60 percent of the world's production, might find India an ally. However, India's top leadership in the key areas continue to be confused. They want to worship Washington and Beijing simultaneously.

Gopal Misra has been associated with national and international media. His books on journalism and geo-politics have been well-appreciated. Views are personal.

## **Majority of South Korean Firms Expect** Significant Economic Difficulties In 2025

SEOUL: A majority of South Korean companies expect the country to undergo significant economic difficulties this year due to deteriorating business conditions, a poll showed on Thursday.

In the survey conducted by the Korea Enterprises Federation (KEF) on 508 companies with over 50 employees in January, 96.9 percent of responding firms said they expect the country to experience economic difficulties in 2025, reports Yonhap news agency.

Among the respondents, 22.8 percent expected the level of economic woes to be more severe



than during the 1997 financial crisis, while 74.1 percent expected significant economic difficulties, though not on the same level as in 1997. When asked about the negative economic impact of the country's ongoing political instability, 47.2 percent cited weakened export competitiveness due to increased foreign exchange volatility, followed by

deterioration of consumer sentiment at 37.8 percent and investment uncertainty 26 percent. Regarding financial burdens and regulatory challenges, 38.4 percent of the businesses cited higher labor costs, while 28.3 percent cited strict industrial safety regulations.

"With the tightening of global trade regulations and domestic political instability, our busiesses are facing an increasingly unpredictable environment," a KEF official said, while urging the government to introduce regulatory reform measures to encourage corporate investment and job creation.

## Democrats criticise Trump for public showdown with Zelensky

**NEW YORK:** Democratic Party leaders have accused US President Donald Trump of batting for his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin during the public showdown with Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelensky at the White House, on Friday.

Democratic Party's Senate leader Chuck Schumer said in a scorching post on X, "Trump and [Vice President JD] Vance are doing Putin's dirty work. Senate Democrats will never stop fighting for freedom and democracy". Former Speaker and Democratic Party's senior leader Nancy Pelosi called the Oval Office confrontation a "shameful display". "Putin must be overjoyed with today's the-

atrics", she said on X. Engaging in a "dignified man-



ner" with Zelensky "would've been a show of strength for the President of the United States", she added. The Democratic Party leader in the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Jean Shaheen said in a statement, "Russia has not been able to break Ukraine's spirit nor its will to fight. We are certain President Trump's childish tantrum will not reach that objective either".

She added, "Today's behaviour by President Trump and Vice President Vance would be more shocking if it wasn't the new normal". Support for Zelensky flowed

in from Democrat governors who declared, "We, along with millions of Americans, stand united with the Ukrainian people". "Americans must protect our strong democratic values on the world stage instead of undermining President Zelensky's work to fight for his nation and the freedom of his people after being invaded by Russia", the Democratic Governors Association said. Democratic Party leader in

the House of Representatives Hakeem Jeffries said, "Today's White House meeting with the President of Ukraine was appalling and will only serve to further embolden Vladimir Putin, a brutal dictator".

## **Talking Points**

## **Narvijay Yadav**



one of their steepest declines in recent among retail investors. history, erasing nearly Rs 83 lakh crore in investor wealth. The Sensex and Nifty have been on a sharp downward trajectory since June 2024, most. In February alone, these with the past month witnessing an especially brutal fall. cline, and analysts warn that This turmoil has left retail investors facing a difficult dilemma -should they stay invested and ride out the storm, or should they cut their losses and exit before things worsen?

The biggest blow to the markets came from renewed global trade tensions. The US, under Trump's leadership, has reintroduced hefty tariffs on imports from several economies, including China. This move has triggered conslowdown, affecting investor looming, foreign institutional investors (FIIs) began withdrawing their funds from

FIIs have withdrawn a staggering Rs 2.1 lakh crore from Indian equities, causing heavy selling pressure. Domestic economic concerns, including high inflation, sluggish GDP growth, and weak corporate

he Indian stock mar- a result, stock prices across kets are experiencing most sectors have been plunging, leading to panic selling

The Scale of the Fall: The recent market rout has been severe, with small and mid-cap stocks suffering the indices saw a steep 13% defurther downside is possible. The Nifty 50, which once hovered near record highs, is now trading at its lowest levels followed a similar trajectory, witnessing sharp corrections.

Most sectoral indices are deep in the red, with IT, real estate, and auto stocks facing the brunt of the sell-off. The only exception has been PSU banks, which have shown relative resilience due to imcerns of a global economic proved earnings and government support. However, with sentiment worldwide. With volatility gripping the market, the possibility of a trade war even these stocks may not remain immune to further corrections

Will the Market Recover: emerging markets like India. Stock markets operate in cycles, and downturns are an inevitable part of investing. While the current situation looks grim, markets have historically bounced back stronger after every major crash. The speed of recovery, thought-out strategy. In such

Walk. The event witnessed

the presence of esteemed

personalities, including CGC

Group of Colleges - Jhanjeri

Chairman Mr Rashpal Singh

Dhaliwal, Managing Director

(MD) Mr. Arsh Dhaliwal, and

## **Investors in Panic:** Hold or Sell?



in months. The Sensex has trade policies, FII activity, and assess their exposure to highdomestic economic stability. With India's strong economic fundamentals and ongoing policy reforms, the long-term growth story remains intact. The current turbulence may present an opportunity for patient investors to accumulate quality stocks at lower valuations.

What Should Investors unsettling, especially for small investors who lack the financial cushion that large institutions enjoy. The temptation to exit during a downturn is high, but history has shown that panic selling often leads to regret when markets eventually recover. The key to surviving such turbulent times lies in adopting a wellearnings, have further damp-ened investor confidence. As tiple factors, including global a scenario, investors must first review their portfolios and

derpal Singh

(MD, Prachar

Advertisers

Pvt. Ltd.), ac-

tor Naginder

Gakhar, ac-

tress Satinder Kaur, and lead

actress Nataly were also pres-

risk stocks

Those invested in fundamentally strong companies with solid earnings and growth prospects should consider holding their positions instead of selling at a loss. For those heavily invested in speculative stocks, rebalancing and shifting towards safer assets may be a wiser **Do:** Market crashes can be approach. Investors with a long-term horizon should continue their SIPs and avoid making impulsive decisions. History has proven that disciplined investors who stick to their strategies tend to benefit when markets stabilize and rebound. Investing is a long game, and those who remain disciplined are often the ones who reap the biggest rewards.

The author is a senior journalist and columnist, views are personal.

Praising the lyrical and musical brilliance of Satwinder Singh Dharak, Mr Rashpal

Singh Dhaliwal and Sardarni

Jagjit Kaur extended their

best wishes for his success,

encouraging him to continue

his journey of creativity and

inspiration.

## Delhi man arrested for selling 'fake tickets' of Diljit Dosanjh's concert

arrested on Tuesday for allegedly selling "fake tickets" to actor-singer Diljit Dosanjh's concert by creating a fake website in the name of Zomato, police said.

The accused was identified as Nitin, a resident of Rajiv Nagar, North West (Delhi).

According to the police, food delivery company Zomato filed a complaint at the Cyber Crime police station (south) on September 17, claiming that fake websites (https://zomato-live. com, https://zomato-live. in, https://zomato-live.online, https://luxuryflame. online/checkout-2/), email ID zometoliveevent@gmail. com in the name of Zomato have been created which has been selling tickets for Diljit Dosanjh's concert when only the said company was authorised for it.

On this complaint, a case was registered under the relevant sections at the Police Station, Gurugram.

During the investigation, the police team led by Inspector Naveen Kumar nabbed the accused.

tion, Nitin revealed that he the account holder."

was selling tickets for Diljit's Another police officer privy concert by creating a fake to the investigation said that he used to edit concert tickets Gurugram Police Spokesand sell them. person Sandeep Kumar said:

"The accused confessed to his crime. The accused will The police team analysed the accused's bank transactions be produced in a city court to in which the cheated amount seek police custody for further interrogation. Further action was transferred. A total of Rs 7, 998 (3999+3999) for two will be taken against the ac-

Sonam Kapoor reveals sister Rhea is the only person who can 'boss her around'



Sonam Kapoor took to social media to pen a heartfelt birthday note for sister, producer Rhea Kapoor. Taking to her Instagram

handle, the 'Neerja' actress dropped a beautiful video montage showcasing her precious memories from childhood to the present day with her sister, Rhea. The video compiles a collection of candid moments from family vacations, parties, and gettogethers, offering a glimpse into their close bond over the years. The clip beautifully captures their journey together, highlighting the laughter, love, and adventures they've shared. For the caption, Sonam

wrote, "Happy Birthday to

my sister, my built-in bestie,

and the only person who can

boss me around (sometimes)!

Work hard, play harder—it's the theme of our life! You better work, bch! Love you, Rhee Bee! #WorkBitch #Birthdayprincess." Anil Kapoor also shared a heartwarming birthday message for his daughter Rhea, calling her the "number one creative female producer of the Indian film industry. The proud father praised her exceptional achievements, which he says can be backed by facts and box office numbers. Sharing photos of the films produced by Rhea, the proud daddy wrote, "Happy Birthday, @rheakapoor ! I can proudly say you are The number one creative female producer of the Indian film industry today can prove it with facts and box office numbers theatrically! digitally! and without doubt the top stylist of our country.. understated fearless, creative,

and sorry laziest too.



website.

A house belonging to alleged drug peddler being bulldozed in Bharariwal area, in Amritsar on Thursday, March 06, 2025. In a major crackdown on drug trafficking, the Punjab government has demolished properties linked to drug traffickers in Amritsar, reinforcing its commitment to making the state drug-free.

## Singh Dharak, marked his musical debut with the release of his song 'Special – MD of 'Rozana Spokesman' actress Nataly were Kujh Khaas' at PVR Mohali Sardarni Jagjit Kaur. Mahin- ent, among others.

Punjab's renowned writer

and journalist, Satwinder

**KULBIR SINGH KALSI** 

SAS Nagar (Mohali

# PM Modi's Diplomatic Upgrade

Satwinder Singh Dharak's Debut Song 'Special – Kujh Khaas' Released

in France 10-12 February 2025

## 1

### Co-chaired Al Action Summit

- Co-chaired with President Macron
- Launched India-France Al Roadmap for safe, secure, and trustworthy Al



### **Dynamic Bilateral Cooperation**

- PM Modi's sixth visit to France
- Inaugurated India's Consulate General in Marseille
- India-France Year of Innovation 2026 to be launched in New Delhi
- France joins India-UAE's Mangrove Alliance for Climate PM Modi paid tribute to Indian soldiers at Mazargues War Cemetery



## **Encrypting Defence & Security**

- India joins Eurodrone MALE Programme as an observer
- Launched **FRIND-X** for defense innovation Strengthened DRDO-ONERA R&D partnership
- Enhanced NSG-GIGN counter-terrorism cooperation
- Focus on **nuclear energy** collaboration



PM Narendra Modi attends Al Action Summit in Paris, France, 11 February, 2025

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# FOREIGN POLICY ALGORITHM





PM Narendra Modi with the President of USA, Mr. Donald Trump

## PM Modi's **Adaptive Strategy** with The USA

12-13 February 2025



- Defence & Security

  10-year Framework for U.S.-India Major Defence Partnership
- ASIA alliance launched for Al-enabled defense tech
- Expanded Tiger Triumph Exercise
- Strengthened Indo-Pacific logistics & intelligence sharing

### Trade & Investment - 'Mission 500'

- Target to double trade to \$500B by 2030 Bilateral Trade Affairs negotiations set for fall 2025
- \$7.35B in new Indian investments in the U.S.A.

#### Technology & Innovation - U.S.-India TRUST Initiative ■ Al Infrastructure Roadmap

- INDUS-X for space, energy, and tech partnerships
- NASA-ISRO: First Indian astronaut to ISS & NISAR Earth-mapping



## **Optimising Energy & Clean Tech**

U.S. support for India's full Int. Energy Agency membership Advancing U.S.-India Civil Nuclear Agreement



### **Evolving Multilateral & Indo-Pacific Security**

- Strengthening Quad for regional security & trade
- Indian Ocean Strategic Venture for infrastructure & commerce
- U.S. approves extradition of Tahawwur Rana Call for Pakistan to act on 26/11 & Pathankot attackers India joins Combined Maritime Forces to secure sea lanes



### **Reinforcing People-to-People Ties**

- 3,00,000 Indian students contribute \$8Bn to the U.S. economy
- Strengthened higher education ties through dual-degree programs
- Streamlined legal mobility for professionals & tourists Enhanced cooperation against trafficking, organised crime, & cyber